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# GARHWAL

## ANCIENT AND MODERN

BY  
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SENIOR SUB-ASSISTANT SURGEON, J.S.M.D.,  
IN MEDICAL CHARGE INDIAN ESTABLISHMENTS OF THE  
ARMY HEAD-QUARTER'S STAFF.



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# FOREWORD

BY

J. M. CLAY, Esq.

*Deputy Commissioner of Garhwal.*

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Twenty years ago in a Government resolution Sir Harcourt Butler referred to Garhwal as *Terra incognita*. Since the campaign in Flanders of 1914-15 his description has become a misnomer; for the deeds of the Garhwali regiment have made the name of their home-land familiar throughout the British Empire and beyond. It is, therefore, very fitting that this book, originally intended to commemorate the centenary of British rule in Garhwal, should make its appearance now, since there must be many whose interest in the district has recently been awakened.

Indeed such a book needs no preface at such a time, and it was only at my friend Dr. Pati Ram's express request that these few words of introduction have been written. Certainly he, if any one, is well fitted for the task he has set himself. Having his home in Nāgpur, perhaps the most typical of the northern parganas, being himself a descendant of one of the old Rajput clans, a famous fighting stock, he has spent his life in long and honorable service outside Garhwal and has but lately returned to enjoy a well-earned rest from his labours. For his close knowledge of his native land and its history,

his admiration for its beauties, his enthusiasm for its past and his hopes for its future I will leave the book itself to speak.

It may indeed come as a surprise to English readers to find that, despite the obscurity into which it has fallen of late, Garhwal was formerly a well-known resort of the learned and a country famous in Hindu legend. Rishis and ascetics in large numbers resorted to its silent valleys for purposes of meditation or the instruction of their disciples. The final scene in the life of the five heroes of the Mahabharata was enacted amid its mountains and many place-names in the Alaknanda valley still recall the memory of Bhim Sen and his brothers. Garhwal may still claim to be the holy land of India: its valleys are full of ancient temples and there is scarcely a ridge, from which the wonderful spectacle of the snowy range is visible, without its humble shrine. Every year thousands of pilgrims from all parts of India make their laborious way on foot along the *Via sacra* of Badrinath.

And now by the strange chance of a war on the other side of the globe Garhwal has made for itself in these latter days a new fame and a more glorious renown.

PAURI, }  
GARHWAL. }

E. M. CLAY.

## PREFACE.

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Garhwal though not an isolated tract detached from the rest of the Himalayas, yet it differs somewhat in its physical Geography from the other Himalayan regions. This, perhaps, has been a feature for its having a well marked early history and ethnography. Religiously too, we find it having a claim to be the first land, where the Vedas were gathered together and divided into four separate collections. The various Puranas, which disclose to us the past history, manners, and customs of our ancestors were also compiled here. The country further affords us means of studying the growth and decay of the various cults of the Hindu religion promulgated by various reformers. The whole of India, seems to have been linked with Garhwal from a very remote antiquity by the bond of a highly consecrated faith which found its natural home in this land, specially the first and foremost worldwide sacred shrines of Kedar and Badari and of the mother of the Indian rivers. The living proof is, that thousands of people yearly drift up to this land which serves them as a reminiscence of the serene recesses of Seers, Saints, Sages, Men of Science, Men of Philosophies and Devotees of rigid austerity of the by-gone ages.

An account of the scenery of Garhwal Himalaya, its fauna and flora, its forests where a solemn quietness reigns for ever signalise the country as one of the best places in the world and worth reading.

The ethnography of Garhwal is as pleasing as its religious history, and there is hardly a caste of India which is not represented here. Its political history from remote ages down to the present one, will enable the reader to find now the great changes in every phase of its progress.

The British Government have taken great pains to explore every nook and corner of this region and after extracting from the scriptures as much information as could be got, have written three big volumes on the Central Himalaya (Atkinson's Himalayan Districts). They contain all that could be secured and leave no gap to be filled in, by such an insignificant work as this. The author further has no pretension that this book may take their place. But owing to the huge size of the above-mentioned works, they cannot be readily utilised by tourists, pilgrims, and students. Moreover, they are scarcely accessible to the general public owing to their high price.

I need hardly say, how useful it will be to the educated Garhwalis and the lover of history to have a brief knowledge of the country. There appeared so long a dearth of information in regard to this country and this has been felt and frequently expressed by many Indian students and travellers.

In view of the fact that Garhwal would be completing its centenary under the British Raj, the author was led to commemorate it by the publication of this book with the hope that as it is, it may interest the readers to a certain extent.

There may be inaccuracies of language, and punctuation in this book and in some places a want of the addition of a few words to make the sense

clear may be noticeable. But the apology of the author is that he tried to bring the pamphlet out in haste.

The author takes this opportunity of respectfully expressing his heartfelt gratitude to Mr. J. M. Clay for perusing the MSS., and encouraging the publication thereof.

Thanks are due to Messrs. A. C. Sanyal, M. A. and Mohamad Ashraf, B.A. as also to my son Saligram Singh Pranter, B.A., for the help they have rendered me by making useful suggestions. He has also to acknowledge his indebtedness to the authors whose valuable opinions he has borrowed and extracts from whose writings he has incorporated in this work.

Parvatipur, }  
Garhwal, }

PATI RAM.





*The proceeds of sale of 800 copies  
will be devoted to the comfort of sick  
and wounded.*

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|--------------|--------------|---------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 9            | 29           | ... the             | ...                                 |
| 9            | 29           | ... Hermitage       | ... Hermitages.                     |
| 10           | 23           | ... Vanepraatha     | ... Vanparasth.                     |
| 10           | 23           | ... Saunyasa        | ... Sanyasa.                        |
| 12           | 1            | ... Where were      | ... Where there were.               |
| 14           | 10           | ... Himalaya        | ... Himalayan.                      |
| 14           | 11           | ... Potlidan        | ... Patlidun.                       |
| 15           | 19           | ... Aabove sea      | ... Above the sea.                  |
| 16           | 24           | ... do.             | ... do.                             |
| 18           | 6            | ... dc.             | ... do.                             |
| 18           | 27           | ... dverage         | ... average.                        |
| 18           | 29           | ... nistance        | ... distauce.                       |
| 19           | 12           | ... Mount           | ... Mont.                           |
| 19           | 13           | ... Mounte          | ... Monte.                          |
| 19           | 16           | ... Jangfran        | ... Jungfrau.                       |
| 20           | 18           | ... Mr. Sheming     | ... Mr. Sherring.                   |
| 21           | 2            | ... Raikhana        | ... Raikana.                        |
| 21           | 4            | ... Cross           | ... Across.                         |
| 23           | 32           | ... Uttarkuro       | ... Utrrakuru.                      |
| 29           | 4            | ... this was        | ... this presumably formed          |
| 29           | 27           | ... At the          | ... At these.                       |
| 41           | 6            | ... beauty and,     | ... beauty.                         |
| 41           | 19           | ... 400—250—66      | ... 400 × 250 × 66, yards.          |
| 41           | 25           | ... Appearance      | ... Appearance"                     |
| 43           | 2            | ... and             | ... which                           |
| 43           | 4            | ... arboreal        | ... arborious.                      |
| 43           | 4            | ... velley          | ... valley.                         |
| 43           | 17           | ... ancient Morains | ... Morains of ancient<br>glaciers. |
| 45           | 11           | ... abeiss          | ... abies.                          |
| 46           | 11           | ... Jungfran        | ... Jungfrau.                       |
| 49           | 11           | ... Mountaineous    | ... Mountainous.                    |
| 57           | 12           | ... Ploughed        | ... Unploughed.                     |
| 65           | 27           | ... Orinithology    | ... Ornithology.                    |
| 65           | 28           | ... do.             | ... do.                             |
| 66           | 2            | ... is said         | ... are said.                       |
| 66           | 17           | ... Pegion          | ... Pigeon.                         |
| 67           | 33           | ... do.             | ... do.                             |
| 68           | 3            | ... corps           | ... crops.                          |
| 70           | 26           | ... class           | ... classes.                        |
| 76           | 24           | ... potentates      | ... potentate.                      |
| 76           | 29           | ... a flourishing   | ... flourishing.                    |
| 76           | 30           | ... cates           | ... caste.                          |
| 78           | 28           | ... tradition       | ... the tradition.                  |

# ERRATA—contd.

|   | <i>Page.</i> | <i>Line.</i> | <i>For.</i>           | <i>Read.</i>           |
|---|--------------|--------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
|   | 89           | 7            | ... of such           | ... such.              |
|   | 89           | 25           | ... Thakur            | ... Thakurs.           |
|   | 90           | 26           | ... Bist              | ... Bists.             |
| l | 92           | 11           | ... this              | ... though this.       |
| r | 92           | 12           | ... nothing           | ... nothing to.        |
| l | 101          | 2            | ... into              | ... under.             |
| - | 103          | 30           | ... of Hindus         | ... of the Hindu.      |
| l | 104          | 22           | ... Vasista           | ... Vasista on.        |
| t | 104          | 29           | ... and               | ... again.             |
| a | 109          | 6            | ... (Mukti)           | ... mukti.             |
| k | 109          | 10           | ... His Mersy         | ... His mercy.         |
| T | 110          | 21           | ... teaching          | ... teachings.         |
| s | 112          | 18           | ... when              | ... then.              |
|   | 112          | 23           | ... adopted           | ... adapted.           |
|   | 112          | 25           | ... It                | ... They.              |
|   | 112          | 27           | ... assume in         | ... assume.            |
|   | 113          | 6            | ... permeating        | ... permeating into.   |
|   | 115          | 20           | ... do-away           | ... do-away with.      |
|   | 118          | 16           | ... Sankra            | ... Sankara charya.    |
| t | 118          | 21           | ... whom were         | ... whom.              |
| l | 120          | 15           | ... their             | ... there.             |
| c | 120          | 26           | ... Gharwal           | .. Garhwal.            |
| l | 123          | 6            | ... fatiches          | ... fetiches.          |
| l | 124          | 15           | ... such actions      | ... such an action.    |
| l | 134          | 11           | ... all-of them chose | ... all chose.         |
| ' | 137          | 26           | ... divides           | ... divide.            |
| c | 139          | 10           | ... Costome           | ... Costume.           |
|   | 161          | 19           | ... sublimed          | ... sublime.           |
|   | 161          | 29           | ... heap              | ... a heap.            |
|   | 163          | 1            | ... birds eye         | ... birdseye.          |
|   | 163          | 8            | ... a grazing         | ... agrazing.          |
|   | 164          | 20           | ... The next 12 miles | ... the next 12 miles, |
|   | 164          | 22           | ... Claime            | ... Claims.            |
|   | 164          | 27           | ... Square            | ... Square and         |
|   | 168          | 18           | ... preceeding        | ... preceding.         |
|   | 176          | 9            | ... to Garhwal        | ... into Garhwal.      |
|   | 177          | 30           | ... come to           | ... come into.         |
|   | 184          | 17           | ... heir              | .. heiress.            |
|   | 187          | 15           | ... achor             | ... anchor.            |
|   | 189          | 11           | ... has               | ... had.               |
|   | 189          | 20           | ... retreat back      | ... retreat.           |
|   | 192          | 26           | ... revages           | ... ravages.           |
|   | 193          | 2            | ... differant         | ... different.         |
|   | 196          | 1            | ... prefering         | ... preferring.        |
|   | 200          | 18           | ... conquered         | .. conquered.          |
|   | 222          | 37           | ... Killiug           | ... Killing.           |

*O. Parthasar. Mukerji -  
College. Howrah Calcutta*

## CHAPTER I.

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### **Garhwal—Its Religious and Historical Significance.**

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PURANAS and Upapuranas unanimously point out that Garhwal from the remotest period attracted the keen attention of orthodox Hindus. Traces also are to be found connecting the pre-Vedic Aryans with this land. But what was the charm that made so deep an impression upon the Hindus to pay a unique homage to this mountainous tract of land from a very early period of their immigration into India ?

When the Aryans first settled in the Punjab, even at that period they had a longing for these hills in preference to other mountainous tracts. We observe that the hill climate alone was not responsible for the extreme love and respect they had for this particular tract at the time of which we are speaking. The Aryans being still in the Punjab, beyond the Sutlej, could have easily found a temperate and mild climate with other mountainous advantages, in the hill tracts to the north of the Punjab, *e. g.*, Kashmere, Kangra, Kullu, and Bushahr. Thus there must have been some higher sentiment which evoked so high a regard and enthusiasm in the mind of the Hindus for this land, and that sentiment has been so strong up to this date that it has been impossible for orthodox Hindus to shake it off.



We shall, however, place some facts and reasons before our readers, which will throw some light on this obscure point and show how this land began to receive the veneration of the Hindus. From the hymns of the Rigveda 1, 4, 8, we understand that the Aryans, while still near the Sindhu river, were longing for a land pleasant in scenery, mild in climate, and rich in natural phenomena. The Rigveda Samhita, vol. I, pp. 197 and 201, also show that they were praying for a land diffused with running water. These, with some other desires, might have led them to send out adventurous parties to explore all the hilly tracts in the north of the Punjab and its neighbourhood. And to the party that had the pleasure and good fortune of visiting the hills of Garhwal they must have appeared from afar as gemlike peaks capped with eternal snow, dazzling in their bright whiteness, awe-inspiring in their loftiness, and possessing unspeakable steepness and sterility with many mighty rivers and innumerable brooks issuing forth from their heart. In short, this picturesque country must have presented a startling contrast to any other hills they might have visited. And we suppose, when they approached nearer, the country unfolded its rigid ranges of numerous hills, all feathered to their summits with trees and foliage evergreen. The shapes of hills they found as beautiful as they were varied, some presenting large vertical walls, others towering aloft in pyramids and cut up in all directions with lovely and small winding valleys and steep narrow gorges with the purest and freshest water existing everywhere in rich abundance, and thousands of springs issuing from the sides of the rocks by tiny picturesque

cascades. The valleys were covered with beautiful trees and enchanting plants, their assorted flowers and foliage decorating them like a heavenly vestment. Thus the explorers were charmed here with Nature's exquisite and surpassing beauty. Moreover, they found the country completely blocked and defended on all sides from the outer world by mighty mountainous walls ; which stood still and solitary like the silent heaven itself. There must have been no sign of life or of living things in the air above, on the hills, mountains or over valleys, except in a few lower wooded tracts which were probably sparsely peopled by aborigines.

The Aryan discoverers seeing the land buried in Nature's sound sleep , and rich in strange visible manifestations of Nature, hailed it as the object which they all were so eagerly seeking for. The Aryans of the Vedic period were worshippers of Nature and Nature in her varied forms was their idol of adoration. Diverse were the names given to Natural phenomena, and the abundance and richness of Nature's beauty found in this country must have been the first and foremost of the causes of its being venerated by the Hindus.

Mr. Sherring in his book on the British Borderland, p. 37, says—" It is interesting to note the steps by which the regions came to occupy its present position in the religious life of the Hindus, for it is not on the main route by which the Aryans entered India. And there is no obvious reason, why it should have taken to itself the homage of a predominantly

first place except on account of its surpassing beauty and striking characteristics."

It appears that from the period the country was explored, the Aryans consecrated it purely for spiritual purposes, and believed that the land conferred a higher sanctity on the acts they performed within it. In that remotest period Garhwal was not studded with the numerous temples, altars, idols and figures which one now finds here. They are all later introductions. But even then the Aryans of that period considered it a worthy temple to remind them of the various manifestations of Nature which they adored.

It has been a belief of the Hindus from the earliest age that man cannot attain salvation (*mukti*) without knowledge; and knowledge cannot be acquired without renouncing all worldly avocations. The Vedas, the Upanishads and the other philosophic writings all point out that the only way to attain final bliss and salvation from the bonds of rebirth and from the pain here and hereafter is secured by knowledge. And to practise and acquire this knowledge, rigid conditions were observed by the ancient Hindus, one of those conditions being residence in a place of retirement, where the mind of the sage or *tapasswi* might remain undisturbed. The *Yoga Upanishad* of the *Atharva Veda* lay much stress on the choice of a right locality for practising *Yoga* for the attainment of knowledge of the soul *Atman*, which is emancipation. *Svetasvatara*, 2 (10), says, "Let the place be pure..... where nothing detracts the mind or offends the eye." *Maitrayana* 6 (30) and *Amritabindu* 17 prescribe "a pure

region," "pleasant and free from faults." Again, according to *Yogatattwa* 15, Yoga should be practised "in a lawful place, quiet, remote and free from distractions." *Ashurika* 2 (21), ordains that "a noiseless place" should be chosen. Again, a Yogi is to make his home by the side of water, or on sandbanks in a river (Katha Sruti, 2) or in a cave in the mountains. *Amritab*, 18, lays stress upon facing the north (the region of the way of the gods) at the time of practising Yoga. "Solitude is as indispensable to the man's spiritual welfare as sleep is to his bodily well-being; and pure thought or meditation, which is evoked by solitude, is to the spirit, what activity is to the body." (St. Paul.) Garhwal fulfilled these conditions and was free from all sorts of carnal desires, disturbances and agitations. It lay in the north—the region of the way of the gods—and hence significantly called the Uttarákhland. It also abounded in edible roots and fruits, and was provided with numerous commodious caves for shelter; at the same time Nature displayed here a great variety of marvellous beauty, colour and shape—all tastefully arranged by the Divine Artist. Here, how well one realizes that "God sleeps in the stone, breathes in the plant, moves about in the animal, and wakes up to consciousness in man."

Really speaking, there is no place, space, time, state or condition where or in which God does not exist or manifest Himself. Above, below, everywhere, His resplendent presence shines in full splendour:—

"Traced in the midnight planets blaze,  
Or glistening in the morning dew,

Whatever is beautiful or fair,  
 Is but its own reflection there.  
 Its is the starry moon of night,  
 The twilight eve— the dewy morn;  
 Whate'er is beautiful and bright  
 Its hands have fashioned to adorn.  
 Its glory walks in every sphere  
 And all things whisper, 'God is here.' "

Thus, the whole Universe is full of inspiration—  
 a reflection of Divine adornment. It is everywhere  
 garnished with the Creator's artistically cut and  
 shaped gems. But frail humanity lacks the spiritual  
 quality, without which it cannot easily recognize the  
 Almighty God. We are all shackled in material form,  
 and this material form conceals beneath its opaque  
 shadows spiritual quality to observe which our eyes,  
 so to speak, are blind ; hence it cannot be seen at  
 all times and in every tiny matter of this world.  
 Of course, there are certain places which manifest  
 the Infinite in their nature. They startle the human  
 mind and their intensity penetrates our consciousness  
 to disclose relations and environments other than  
 those with which we have hitherto been familiar.  
 Thus, Nature's wonders reflect an intuitive perception  
 of God in man, even if he possess but a little of spirit-  
 ual quality. Moreover, the place where sacred rites  
 have been performed and where the natural man re-  
 ceived intuitive power, thrills the human soul with  
 joy and gladness. Garhwal is a place of this nature ;  
 and although, as we have already stated, each and  
 everything in this Universe is God's mystery, should  
 one examine it carefully, he would find Nature dis-

*playing here marvellous beauty, grandeur, and sublimity, in all its various aspects, thus making it a repository of mystery, harmony, and sanctity.*

Of all the holy lands in India, this small tract of country has exerted a mighty influence on the Hindus as regards their religion, and has taken a prominent place in their thoughts. In reading the accounts of this country in the sacred books of the Hindus, we do not, however, find any discussion of the facts as to how the various localities of this country bore upon them the impression of its being the holiest of all other lands in Bhàrata Varsha. Excepting religious events, the land has no other claim to historical importance at the remotest Vedic period.

At so early an age as Vedic, holy saints, sages and patriarchs like Vasishtha, Kasyapa, Atri, Jaundagni, Gautama, Vishwamitra and Agastya, etc., repaired to this land for the attainment of Divine knowledge. Most of these Rishis were seers of the hymns of the Rigveda and highly spiritual, possessing rich knowledge and elevating thoughts. The Saptarishis, after obtaining their emancipation from this land, rose from the lower depths of materialism to the celestial heights of divine contemplation.

According to local traditions, at the close of the Vedic age, a high personage, Ram Chandra, the great defender of the Vedic Faith, who from his childhood had occupied an exceptional position in the history of the Hindu race, a prince of perfect truth, virtuous and holy in his actions, retired for meditation in his old age in Devaprayaga at the con-

fluence of the Bhagirathi and the Alaknandá. In commemoration of his visit an image appears to have been erected and placed in a temple at that place, when idol-worship was embraced by the Hindus.

The sage Kanva had his *ashram* or hermitage here, and Shakuntala (daughter of Vishwamitra and the heroine of Kalidas' famous drama of that name) and King Dushyanta were betrothed in this land.

In Skandha Purana, Part LX, Kedar Khand, in a verse, Shiva said to Uma—"This Kedar Kshetra is as ancient as He Himself, it surpasses all the *tirthas* and it is a land where Nature stands personified. It is the summary of all the *tirthas* of the earth. There is no place on this fair earth which can compare to this holy land."

Another high souled personage, Sree Krishna, sat in meditation for ten years on that square castle-like mountain Gandha Madan in Badri Nath. Ram Chandra and Krishna according to Hindu belief, were incarnations of Vishnu, and up to the present day are being worshipped as full *Avataras*. The visit to Garhwal of these and other high personages for contemplation goes a great length to show how deeply this land presented an attraction even to those personages who were already inspired beings. Out of the example set by these saints and sages, a more sober faith sprang up which was zealously followed by the masses of the Hindu community.

The Rishis of the Vedic period were divinely inspired persons, and the Aryans of that period embraced a religion which had been revealed to these Rishis—the

seers of the Vedas—and which consisted of prayers and sacrifices. It recognized many gods, almost all being idealisations of the various phenomena of Nature. Garhwal, as we have stated above, exhibited these and other extraordinary phenomena of Nature in abundance, which fact attached a greater sanctity to this place in the minds of the Aryans. They began to consider the place as a great temple which reminded them of their gods—the various manifestations of Nature. To them the place had an appearance of a ‘sanctuary of sanctuaries.’ Hence it was evident that the Rishis and the Hindus of the Vedic Age took the land to be a consecrated place, selected by Nature itself, for the performance of religious ‘Yaginas,’ sacrifices and other sacred rites, with the view that a higher sanctity would be conferred upon the rites or ceremonies performed within this land. Even up to this day, it is a universal belief that prayers offered to the Deity in a place hallowed and consecrated for that purpose is more effectual; praises of God from a sacred place are always more acceptable. On this belief, the whole of Garhwal had been a consecrated place to the Aryans from the Vedic Age down to the end of the Epic period.

Most probably this was the period at which the banks of the Bhagirathi, the Alaknanda, the Mandakini and other rivers from the snow-capped peaks of Himavanta down to Haridwar were thronged with the hermitage of pious and religious ascetics. Later on, in the Brahmanic Age also, when the Brahman supremacy was at its zenith, the country received a great influx of saints, sages, poets and philosophers. So much stress was laid by the Brahmans on the performance



of costly 'Yagmas,' rites and rituals, that rich and poor alike, leaving all worldly connections, retired to this land. Every place, cave, rivulet, brook, is, up to this day, dedicated to some rishi or muni or other ascetic who had spent some of his time in meditation and the practice of self-denial, and these places have their appropriate legends. The followers of Buddha also regarded this country with profound reverence and selected it as the most suitable place for the performance of religious rites, etc., as well as for leading the monastic and ascetic life with a view to approach the Deity more closely than can be done in an ordinary unsanctified ground.

Moreover, the whole of Garhwal, being a quiet, secluded place possessing numerous advantages over other hilly tracts, attracted another class of highly cultured Brahmans to develop their independent free thought. During the Brahmanic period Garhwal remained the seat of Vedic, Puranic and other philosophic learning of the highest order. In fact, the place was consecrated for the acquirement of learning. It was here that the four *áshrams* (stages of life), *viz.*, Brahmacharya, Grihasth, Vanaprastha and Saun-yasa, were framed for every Hindu. The great Vyás Muni arranged and compiled the Puranas and the Mahabharata in a cave called Vyás Gufá on the banks of the Saraswati, the tributary of the Vishnu Ganga near the Máná village in Garhwal. He alone is said to have had ten thousand disciples under him, which fact made it obviously necessary for the compilers and other great teachers (*gurús*) to choose, for self-abnegation, places, quiet and desolate, where nothing might distract the mind or deviate the attention of the disciples. Again, we find an allusion made in

the Hindu sacred books that five out of six founders of the various schools of Philosophy started their schools in Garhwal, *i.e.*, Kapila in Hardwar ; Kasyapa in Badri Nath ; Gautama on the banks of the Mandákini ; Vyás and Jaimini on the banks of the river Saraswati. Thus, the country had been a sweet home of thousands of young disciples of various schools, who made oral and musical repetition of the Puranas, the Mahabharata, the Vedas, Sutras, Brahmanas and philosophies. It must have taken centuries for these pupils to learn all these by heart before disseminating their learning to the dumb masses outside. Garga, the great astronomer, made his devotions in the Dronagiri mountain of this country. He, too, must have had many disciples and pupils under him whom he trained to diffuse his science of astronomy among the outside world. Even up to this day the science of astronomy is preserved to a better extent in this country than in other parts of India.

Later on, when Buddhism had declined and lost all its fervour for its votaries, and idol-worship had asserted itself as a natural sequel, this land lost its general consecration, and particular places, where images of Shiva and Vishnu and other Vedic or non-Vedic deities were placed in temples, came to be regarded as holier and more sacred than the others, *e.g.*, Kedar Nath and Badri Nath.

After exploring the Central Himalayan region, the Aryans designated it as the **Ancient Designation.** Celestial land or Deva Bhumi, especially the land situated between the Alaknánda and the Mandákini, *i.e.*, the modern Nagpur. In fact, Heaven (Svarga) in those days was sought to be identified with the regions of Garhwal Himalaya,

where were the Meru, Kailash, Gandhá Mádan, and the blessed habitants like Kuvera, Siva and Vishnu. (*Mahabharata*.)

At the end of the Vedic Age, when the Aryans were still in the Punjab, a clan of them, called the Tritusus, migrated to the regions of Central Himalaya, and designated this country by their clan suffix *Tritusus* (this has also been clearly explained in the chapter on the Rulers of Garhwal).

In the Brahmanic Age, when the Aryans extended towards the fertile valley of the Ganges, Brahmans grew supreme, and learning flourished greatly amongst them on the banks of the Saraswati. A great number of Brahma and Raj Rishis rushed up to the Central Himalayan region for contemplation and acquirement of knowledge. Thus, after the Vedic Age, this tract had come to be known by the title of Brahmarishi Desha. (*Manu*, 11, 19.)

During the Epic period, this region was known by the name of Panchala Desha. Though the domain of the Panchalas extended to a great distance, nevertheless Garhwal formed a greater portion of the Panchalas and was in a flourishing state.

After the Kurukshetra war, some of the old Aryan clans became extinct, and new tribes came into prominence, so that at the end of the Epic period, or in the Buddhistic Age, we find Garhwal inhabited in the north by Kiratas and Tanganas. Ptolemy writes that "these tribes were populated from the Jamuna to the Sárdá (Kalinadi in Kumaun), and the whole country was called Tangnoi."

After the establishment by Sankaracharya of the two sacred shrines of Siva and Vishnu at

Kedar and Badri in about 800 A.D., this country had been known by the names of Kedar Khand and Badriká Sharma. Though several Puranas, such as Vaman, Siva, Skandha, etc., have reference to these two words in them, however, we presume, this renders them objects of suspicion. For, at the time the Puranas were collected by Vyas Muni, there were neither public temples, nor was image worship yet in vogue. Of course, consecrated places were recognized as *tirthas*. Idol-worship was adopted by the Hindus after the death of Buddha (526 B.C.). In Garhwal Sankaracharya built temples dedicated to Siva, Vishnu and other gods or goddesses in places of Buddhist Dagbas. Therefore, the Puranas, subservient to the object of illustrating the sanctity of holy places, present rather a questionable appearance.

Even in Sankara Bijaya or the life of Sankara written subsequent to his death, reference has been made to Sankara's visiting Badrikasharma and Kedar-eshwar, but no mention whatever is made of the word 'Garhwal.' We, therefore, presume that the modern designation was given to the country after 1200 A.D. We observe that in performing 'sankalpa' this country is called by some of the priests *Garh pal desha* instead of Garhwal, which makes us surmise that the modern name has been given to this land by one of the Rajas of the dynasty of Kanak Pal, and most probably by Raja Ajai Pal on his establishing a firm domain in Garhwal. Judging from the nature of the country, the Raja gave it the name of *Garh*, adding the word *Pal* as his family suffix. Our readers will observe from the pedigree of the Garhwal Rajas that until about 1300 A.D. each of them had the suffix of Pal.

## CHAPTER II.

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### Topography.

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SKANDHA Purana Kedar Khand defines the boundaries of this holy land as the Himalaya mountains to the north, Gangadwar (Haradwar or Haridwar) and Tarai to the south, Kalinadi (Sarda) to the east, and the Jamuna to the west. The present work refers to the British as well as to the State Garhwal. The boundaries of British Garhwal have been defined by Mr. Batten as follows :—"On the north by the Himalaya snowy peaks, on the east by the Trisuli peak, Ramganga and Potlidun, on the west by the Mandakini tributary of the Alaknándá and the high ranges along its western bank from Kedar Nath to Rudraprayag, and thence the Alaknándá to Devaprayag, and thence the Ganga, properly so called, after the union of all its branches to 20 miles below Haradwar, separates the districts from the Raja of Garhwal's reserved territory and from British districts Dehradun and Saharanpur, and on the south is the Tarai or Bhabur, and these, except in the case of Taluka Chandi on the Ganges, which forms a small triangular corner separated from Bijnor by the Sasan stream, the actual base of the lowest range of hills with only a few level gorges running up between some of the projecting points of the mountains, is the boundary

between the district and Zilla Bijnor." British Garhwal is about 100 miles in length and 60 miles in width, and has an area of 5,500 sq. miles in extent, of which one-fifth belongs to the snowy range. For administrative purposes it has been divided into eleven *pargannas*, which are further subdivided into 86 *puttis*.

Crossing the plains to the interior of the district we meet the marshy *Tarai* and waterless *Bhabur*. Beyond this are the lower hills of Garhwal called the *Sivalik range*; in fact, the whole district consists of many ranges of hills. These hills rise abruptly along their outer limits to a height of about 7,000 feet; and as we proceed in a northerly direction we find them gradually rising higher and higher in altitude, but nowhere exceeding 12,000 feet in height till the region is succeeded by the great snowy range, a region so elevated that some of its passages are 18,000 feet above sea level.

From the principal high peaks (described below) starts an intricate ramification of subordinate ridges giving an irregular and confused appearance. "The whole district," says Mr. Batten, "when viewed from a commanding position exhibits the appearance of a wide expanse of unconnected ravines, rather than a succession of regular ranges of mountains. The high ridge group is separated from the other groups by very deep valleys determining the course of several great rivers and torrents, which make their way down into the valleys of rapid declivity and extraordinary depth. The interval between the bases of the hills is everywhere extremely small, there is hardly a valley more than half a mile in breadth."

*The country consists of a mass of high hills and*  
**Mountains.** *snowy mountains looking as if*  
 they had been placed thus by the Divine Artist simply to glorify Him by their grandeur. In height the hills look like mountains, whereas the mountains transcend the clouds. From Cashmere to Assam, a distance of about 1,500 miles, nowhere do we find so many clusters of peaks of the average unparalleled height, with the exception of Mount Gauri Shankar (Everest), Kinchinjunga, and Dhaulagiri, which are in Nepal, whose summits are covered with eternal snow and whose white towering pinnacles pierce the clouds.

The snowy peaks of Garhwal have a peculiarity of forming distinct groups, a fact which we do not find in other Himalayan tracts. The chief of this group is that of which Nanda Devi is the culminating peak, 25,589 feet above sea level. In front of it and to the south-west, lies the great ridge of Trisul, which is nowhere less than 20,000 feet in elevation for a length of ten miles. It has six peaks, three of which are 23,406, 22,490, 22,360 feet in height, while the other three are not less than 20,000 feet above sea level.

To the north-west of Nanda Devi, we find Dunágiri peak, attaining a height of 23,531 feet, and to the north-west of this peak is situated the Nitipass, leading to Tibet, which is 16,295 feet above the sea level. It is interesting to note that in the Vedic period, this Dronagiri or Dunagiri mountain was said to produce medicinal herbs; of this we will speak hereafter. There are two other beautiful peaks due east of Dunagiri.

Now we pass on to the great Badri Nath group, which lies to the west of Nanda Devi and is some 30 miles in length. It has several lofty snowy peaks studded together like diamonds among pearls, but they are not so high as those in the preceding two groups. The highest are the Satopant peaks, four in number, ranging in elevation from 21,991 to 23,240 feet. Then come the Kunaling peaks, 21,226 and 20,038 feet high. From the glaciers of these peaks emanates the Vishnu Ganga. To the south-west of these, are situated two magnificent peaks called Nara and Narain which are connected with the sacred Gandha Madan by a chain of smaller peaks. Nali Kanth is another peak due east of them. On their eastern slopes lie the great glaciers Bhagat Kharak and Satopant, which are the sources of the holy stream flowing by Badri Nath; and on the east of Satopant lies the Mana pass, where there are three peaks above 22,000, three above 21,000, and three above 20,000 feet.

To the west of this group, at a distance of about 10 miles, are the Kedar Nath peaks, two in number, known as Kharcha Khand and Bharat Khand, 21,695 and 22,844 feet respectively in elevation. The shrine of Kedar Nath is situated just below these peaks. The Mandakini rises from the south-eastern base of the Kedar Nath peak. From the Kedar Nath to the west is a continuous ridge extending right up to the Bhagirathi. This ridge is adorned with a dozen dazzling peaks, attaining an elevation of over 20,000 feet.

Taking the preceding three groups together, there are in this magnificent cluster four peaks over 23,000, nine over 22,000, eleven over 21,000, and eight over 20,000 feet above sea level, in a tract about



26 miles from north to south and 30 miles from east to west. In addition to these, there are several other peaks of vast proportions, *viz.*, the Jamnotri group\* and the group of peaks lying on the ridge separating the Alaknanda and the Dhaul valley, the highest in which is Kamet, 25,443 feet above sea level.

The magnificence and grandeur of this portion of the Himalayas is thus described by Sir John Strachey in his work "India":—

"In the earlier part of my Indian life I had the good fortune to be employed for about ten years in various offices in Kumaon and Garhwal, and I spent many summers in the higher regions of the Himalayas, sometimes among the almost countless glaciers at the sources of the Ganges and its tributaries, or visiting the passes into Tibet, one of them more than 18,000 feet above the sea, or on the forest-covered ranges immediately under the snowy peaks. I have seen much of European mountains, but in stupendous sublimity, combined with a magnificent and luxuriant beauty, I have seen nothing that can be compared with the Himalayas.

"Although none of the Kumaon summits reach an elevation equal to that attained by a few of the peaks in other parts of the chain, for only two of them exceed 25,000 feet, it is probable that the average elevation of the snowy range of Garhwal and Kumaon is nowhere surpassed. For a continuous distance of some 200 miles the peaks constantly reach a height of from 22,000 to more than 25,000 feet."

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\*The principal peak of which is Bandarpunch (20,731 feet).

Comparing the Himalayas with some well-known European mountains, Sir John adds—"To the traveller who remembers the wild magnificence of the peaks and glaciers of the Himalayas and the general sublimity of its aspect, Zermatt and Chamouni seem insignificant. The mere fact that the ranges of the Himalayas are often twice as high as those of the Alps gives no idea of their relative magnitude. The whole of the Bernese Alps might, it has been said, be cast into a single Himalayan valley. We might almost as reasonably, when the Scotch or Welsh hills are white with snow, compare them with Mount Blanc and Mount Rosa, as compare anything in the Alps with Nanda Devi and Trisul. If, preserving the form of its great obelisk, we could pile the Matterhorn upon the Jungfrau, we should not reach the highest summits of the Himalayas, and should have a mountain less wonderful than the astonishing peak of Dunagiri."

Thus in magnificence, in average height, and in the number of peaks, no other mountainous tract surpasses Garhwal hills and mountains. The one square-like mountain Gandha Madan has not its equal in magnificence and shape throughout the rest of the Himalayan range. As a matter of fact, this portion of the Himalayas (the Himachal) has been receiving great veneration from the Hindus from the earliest period. "In a hundred ages of the gods," writes one of the old Sanskrit poets, "I could not tell you of the glories of Himachal."

According to the Mahabharata, Mount Meru stands in the centre of the earth, somewhere to the north of the Himalayas; at the same time Gandha Madan mountain is said to be on the west of the Mount

Meru and close to it and Jambudwipa to the south-east of it. The opinion of modern writers concerning Mount Meru, says Mr. Sherring in his book on Tibetan Borderland, "is somewhat conflicting. Some indicate Meru in the North Pole, others point it to the north and west of Cashmere." According to the allegorical description given in the Puranas, Mount Meru is in the middle of the universe, all the planets revolve round it, and in shape it is like the cup or seed vessel of a lotus; all the dwipas like petals (islands) spread round it. It is formed of gold; the Ganges falls from the heavens on its peak and thence flows to the sea. Its summit is the residence of Brahma and the meeting-place of the Devas. Some of the descriptions given above of Mount Meru, *e.g.*, the flowing of the sacred Ganges from or near it and its lotus-like shape may be said to apply to the Gandha Madan mountain, so, says Mr. Sherring, "that the strong belief of the Hindus and the local traditions inherited from ancient times point to the location of Mount Meru in that portion of the Himalayas that we have just described."

There is a chain of glaciers from Nanda Devi to Gangotri. Some were mapped  
 Glaciers. by the Great Trigonometrical Survey Department years ago, but others remain still unexplored. In 1907 a mountaineering party, consisting of Major Bruce, Mr. Mumm, and Dr. Longstaff,

proceeded from Ramni *via* Niti in the Dhaulī valley up the Raikhana glacier on their way to Kamet and Nali Kanth. During their upward journey, they came cross the following glaciers :—

- |                    |     |  |
|--------------------|-----|--|
| 1. Arhamni         | ... | West of Nanda Devi.                            |
| 2. Bagat Kharak    |     | Below Nali Kanth.                              |
| 3. Satopant        | ... | A few miles to the north-west of Mana village. |
| 4. Bagini          | ... | Opposite Dunagiri.                             |
| 5. Banke           | ... |  |
| 6. Beta Toli       | ... | Near Lata Kharak.                              |
| 7. Juma            | ... |  |
| 8. Kamet           | ... |  |
| 9. Khaiam          | ... |  |
| 10. Kosa           | ... |  |
| 11. Lwani          | ... |  |
| 12. Raikhana       | ... |  |
| 13. Pindari        | ... |  |
| 14. Thiap-ka-bank. |     |  |
| 15. Trisul         | ... |  |

Of the scenery of some of them Mr. Mumm writes :—

“Raikhana glacier is worth seeing, and worth going to see, though I must own that, if I ever found myself in the Dhaulī valley again, it is the last place there which I should wish to revisit.”

Of another glacier the same writer says :—

“Here we stopped for some time to take in leisurely one of the wildest and most imposing pieces of scenery that I have ever come across.”

Of the Bhyundar Kharak near Lakpal tank he again writes :—

“We passed the snout of Bhyundar glacier next morning in about three-quarters of an hour, at a height of 12,000 feet. There were no traces of the Lakpal-ka-kund lake of the Great Trigonometrical Survey map. It was again a brilliant day, and the luxuriant meadows were ablaze with flowers. Longstaff enumerates ferns, yellow lillies, and anemones, green fritillaries, purple monkshood, and in the drier spots a beautiful blue dwarf irish and white and red wild strawberries, with forget-me-nots and large yellow king-cups by the streams ; I have a pleasing recollection of wild onion as well.”

Adverting to the rivers of the country, we may say that there is no country in the world of the dimension of Garh-

#### Rivers.

wal which has so many big rivers as a traveller will find in this land. The statement at pages 31 and 32 shows the principal rivers, their tributaries and their origin. The district has 60 rivers of different sizes, besides these there are rivulets, rills, springs, and fountains in hundreds, showing that Nature has been specially bountiful to this land in the matter of its water-supply.

The chief river of the land is the Ganga of mythological fame. It is stated in the Ramayana and other Shastras that the river was first explored by King Bhagirath, an ancestor of Ram Chandra, who, according to the Solar King's genealogy, seems to have flourished in the mid-Vedic Age. This king made her known to the Aryans, who had at the time settled down in the Punjab. There are conflicting opinions in regard to the source of this river.

The Hindu Shastras tell us one story, while the modern explorers give us another.

Valmiki, in his Ramayana, describes her origin from Siva's tangled hair of head (which perhaps represents Mount Kailas, supposed to be the residence of God Siva), from where the river was cast off in the direction of Vindu lake, which has not yet been identified. We presume that lake Mansarowar must be the Vindu lake of Valmiki. Thence the river is stated to have branched off in three directions, *i.e.*, three streams of the excellent Ganges went in the easterly direction, while Suchakshu, Sita and the mighty Sindhu flowed towards the west, and the seventh followed Bhagirath's car, and for this very reason, we think, the synonym Tripathga (taking three courses) is given to the Ganges.

In Skandha Purana, Kedar Khand, it is mentioned that the Ganges flowed out in ten streams, one of which is the Mandakini.

According to Vishnu Purana, Book II, Chap. II, "The Ganga descending from the heavens divides itself into four mighty rivers, flowing in four different directions. These rivers are—(1) The Sita, which passing by the east side of the Meru, runs through the country of Bhadrashva (identified with China in *Asiatic Researches*, Vol. VIII, p. 354) and falls into the ocean; (2) the Alaknanda, which flows south towards the country of Bharata and dividing itself into seven rivers on its way, falls into the sea; (3) the Chaksu, which traversing over the western mountains, falls into the sea; (4) the Bhadra, which washes the country of Uttarkuro and empties itself into the northern ocean."

Modern opinion, however, is that Gangotri is the source of the Ganges. Sir John Strachey in his "India" says :— "The greatest rivers of India all come from the Himalayas. It is remarkable that although their courses through India to the sea are so widely divergent, their chief sources are not far apart from each other. They are in the high Tibetan plateau near the lake Mansarowar and the peak of Kailas—names among the most sacred of Hindu mythology. This is strictly true of the Indus, the Sutlej, and the Brahmaputra, and although the Ganges seems to be an exception, it can hardly be said to be one.

"The true story of the source of the Ganges is curious. We all know how, in the last century, Bruce was supposed to have discovered the source of the Nile, and how it afterwards appeared that he had been to the head, not of the great river, but of one of its tributaries. Something of the same sort may be said of the Ganges.

"Almost every work on the geography of India still tells us that the Ganges has its origin in the glacier, or, as it is oftener and inaccurately called the snow-bed of Gangotri, where it issues from the ice-cave—the 'Cow's-mouth' of the sacred books of the Hindus. The truth is, apart from mythology, religion and common belief, and judging as we judge less holy streams, Gangotri has no claim to be called the source of the Ganges, designating by that name the river that issues from the mountains at Hardwar. The river which comes from Gangotri is the Bhagirathi, one only of the numerous Himalayan feeders of the true Ganges. The main stream is that of the

Alaknanda, which has a much larger course, and at all seasons of the year, a much larger body of water than the Bhagirathi ; its most distant sources are on the southern side of the watershed near the Niti and Mana passes in Tibet, and it collects the drainage of the peaks and glaciers of Kumaon and Garhwal Himalaya from Nanda Devi to the sacred shrines of Badri Nath and Kedar Nath. These two streams unite about 40 miles above Hardwar at Devaprayag and are thenceforward known as the Ganga or Ganges."

While the Shastras quoted above appear to differ widely in their descriptions of the course of the Ganges, yet they are in complete agreement on one point, *viz.*, that the Ganges issued from the matted hair of Mahadeva. This has a special significance for us in so far as it helps our deduction considerably. Alaknanda is derived from the words Alak (locks) and Nanda (*nandini*) (a daughter), *i.e.*, the daughter of locks. It will not be unfair if we incline to the view that Alaknanda is no other than the main Ganges, with the limitation that the river up to Devaprayag, where Bhagirathi meets her, is known as Alaknanda, and in her onward course she is called the Ganges. Vishnu Puran also lends support to this theory. In immensity of volume, in the central position that she commands, and the circumstance that a group of rivers empty themselves into her bosom--in all physical features Alaknanda possesses in an eminent degree the attributes assigned to the Ganges. Moreover, a special sanctity attaches to Alaknanda in the fact that prayags (sacred pilgrim stations) are found at the confluences of this river alone. We admit that at the confluence



of Jamuna and the Ganges near Allahabad, there is a noted prayag, but we must not forget that Jamuna and Alaknanda emanate from the same source and there exists a special affinity between the two. We derive our authority from the Shastras, but we are happy to find that we are driven to the same conclusion as that drawn by Sir John Strachey from a scientific and geographical standpoint.

We again fall in with Sir John Strachey's view that the Ganges flowed out from a watershed in Tibet or from our Shastrie matted hair of Mahadeva in Mount Kailas. From her very source she takes several courses, each retaining in full the special sanctity that attaches to the Ganges herself. The main course is Alaknanda, while second in importance comes Bhagirathi. This branch derives her name from the fact that she followed King Bhagirath's car. The royal sage, after years of meditation, propitiated Ganga and the goddess graciously condescended to traverse his country thus bringing salvation to the departed spirits of his ancestors—so say the traditions, and Ramayana confirms the belief commonly held by the Hindus. Bhagirathi, after fulfilling her mission, effects a junction with her sister Alaknanda at Devaprayag and the combined river resumes her original name of Ganga and moves down majestically to meet the sea. The Shastrie interpretation is thus not far removed from the discovery made by explorers of the present day.

It will not be out of place to mention here that the celebrity of the Ganges is known to the world. We must point out that there must have been

some special and well-founded reasons why the attribute of being the purest is ascribed only to the Ganges water by the Hindus. Hitherto, men of modern light hesitated in accepting this orthodox belief and considered it only to be a superstition. But modern science is coming to support and confirm the ancient traditions and belief in attributing a special blessedness to the Ganges water. E. H. Hankin, in his preface to the 5th edition of his excellent pamphlet on "The Cause and Prevention of Cholera," writes as follows :—" Since I originally wrote this pamphlet I have discovered that the water of the Ganges and the Jumna is hostile to the growth of the cholera microbe, not only owing to the absence of food materials but also owing to the actual presence of an antiseptic that has the power of destroying their microbes." (*Indian Medical Gazette*, No. 12 of 1900.)

As a rule the course of the rivers in the hills or mountains is tortuous and serpentine. "The banks of all the streams are abrupt and high, rapids and eddies occur in all the rivers at short distances apart. The usual appearance is a succession of short sharp rapids, sometimes having a considerable fall with a long and deep pool. Occasionally the bed becomes very narrow and runs between gorges with high impassable cliffs on either bank. Such phenomena are most frequent on the Alaknanda and Pindar." (*Atkinson's Himalayan Districts*, Vol. III.) Up from the hills they dash turbulently over boulders of rocks and through deep defiles, emerging at length as if glad to escape from the control of the mountains. Near Badri Nath and Kedar Nath a traveller will observe in some

places, the rivers foaming, the stones rolling and the pebbles falling with a terrific noise—making the scene thus possess a savage wildness all its own. The sight would at times be appalling to a traveller. In the early part of May above Pandukeshar the river is entirely concealed under avalanches for a considerable distance, forming a temporary bridge which is utilized by the pilgrims and other passers-by, but it is fraught with danger, as sometimes a part of it collapses.

Of these snow bridges writes Mr. Munro :—

“ I have already had occasion to mention these snow bridges, certainly one of the most remarkable features of the country. Nothing impresses upon one so much as the stupendous dimensions of the Himalayan snowfall and the spectacle of largish rivers covered at midsummer by solid masses of hard snow, many feet in thickness completely fill their channels sometimes for miles together. They often facilitate travel and make ordinary routes shorter and easier : sometimes they themselves constitute the sole available route. There is a pass into Tibet a little north-west of Mana, which is described in the Great Trigonometrical Survey map in these terms.”

Should a person happen to pass along some of the tributaries of the Vishnu Ganga and Dhaulī (Western), while he would be highly delighted to enjoy the beautiful scenes spread before him, the desolation that reigns in the glens would set him thinking why Nature had endowed the place with such exquisite loveliness and grandeur. Again, in some places the rivers themselves, as if fearing to disturb Nature's slumber, silently glide on and lose themselves in boulders and avalanches without making the least

noise of water-splashing. The valleys of the Saraswati and Rishi or Rini Ganga are unsurpassable in solitude, where nothing can distract the mind or divert the attention of man. This was the attraction of the Rishis of yore in selecting places like these for imparting the mnemonic knowledge of the Vedas and other Shastras to their pupils. The silvery Dhauli has an impetuous course all through till she unites with Vishnu Ganga, with this peculiarity that she has a distinctive colour, the cause of which has yet to be explained by modern scientists.

All the Garhwal rivers take their origin in close proximity to one another in the snows and then pursue a divergent course, except Alaknanda, which from its very source takes a central position in the land, as if she were the head of her family group. Others take the superfluous moisture of the soil through minor streams, rills and rivulets, mark the land with geographical divisions and then fall into Alaknanda, and by their union form five prayags or confluences, *viz.*, Vishnu, Nanda, Karana, Rudra and Deva, which stand on Alaknanda in her downward course in the order in which we have mentioned them. As a rule, the rivers that join Alaknanda have more velocity on account of their great declivity or stones in their basins, especially such is the case at Vishnu, Rudra and Deva prayags. At the confluences, Alaknanda generally gently inclines towards her sisters, as if to embrace them lovingly, while the latter flow into her, roaring and foaming, as if to give loud expressions to their feelings of joy at their reunion with a long separated sister. It seems that all the Garhwal rivers have a deep love and attachment for one another. Alaknanda takes her

sisters warmly into her own bosom and flows down from Hardwar offering shelter to eleven other rivers emanating from the neighbouring Himalayan tracts. The only river in Garhwal which does not join the Ganges within the limits of the district, is the upper waters of the Western Ramganga—a considerable tributary of the former. It meets the Ganges in the Hardoi district of Oudh in the plains. 16355

All the principal rivers lie in a line of lowest elevation and have high and abrupt banks. This is the reason they are not brought into use for irrigation purposes. However, in the case of smaller rivers or streams, wherever cultivable land occurs near their bed, they are utilized for irrigation, and are also made available for giving power to mills for grinding corn. None of these rivers, owing to their great velocity and the existence of rocks, boulders, shoals and rapids, can be used for navigation, though several are used for floating timber. On the whole, the presence of so many rivers, streams and rivulets, etc., is very beneficial to the growth of crops, and the luxuriant vegetation in the country. In Upper Garhwal where the rivers are numerous, famine is rarely experienced by the people. For whenever the rainfall is scanty, the natural processes of evaporation and condensation come to the people's help; a considerable portion of the water that is evaporated by the sun in the day-time condenses and settles down as dew during the night.

To the mountains and rivers are due the luxuriant vegetation, seasonable rains, a fertile soil and a wholesome bracing climate. But before the advent of the British Raj they interrupted through communication and thus acted as great impediments to the moral and material development of the people.

*Statement showing the names of principal rivers in Garhwal, their tributaries and their origin.*

| Rivers.  | Tributaries.  | Origin.  |
|--|---|--|
| 1 "Vishnu Ganga," from Kunaling peaks                                | Saraswati<br>Satpatai<br>Pabigar<br>Supan   | Rising from the crest of Mana pass.<br>Kunaling peak.<br>Ditto.<br>Ditto.  |
| 2 "Dhauli" (Western) rises near Niti pass.                           | Girthee<br>Rini Ganga<br>Ganges Ganga   | Kungzi Bungri's range.<br>Nanda Devi peak.   |
| 3 "Alaknanda," formed by the confluence of 1 and 2 at Vishnu prayag. | Rudra Ganga<br>Patal Ganga<br>Birahi Ganga<br>Bala Suti<br>Nigomati<br>Nandakini<br>Pindar<br>Mandakini<br>Nayar (Eastern and Western) ...<br>Receives numerous hill torrents<br>all streams on its both sides... | Rudra Nath and Tung Nath.<br>Tung Nath.<br>Western slopes of Trisuli Kantha.<br>North of Danpur Pindari glacier.<br>S.-E. base of Kedar Nath peak.<br>Dudaki Toli range. |
| 4 "Nandakini" meets the Alaknanda at Nanda prayag.                   | Bhai Ganga<br>Kail Ganga<br>Takor<br>Goptara<br>Bhavari and Taligar   |  |
| 5 "Pindar" meets the Alaknanda at Karana prayag.                     | Sini meets at Soniwar<br>Kali Kalimath<br>Bira near Nalla<br>Akash Kamini   |  |
| 6 "Mandakini" meets the Alaknanda at Rudra prayag.                   |   |  |

*Statement showing the names of principal rivers in Garhwal, their tributaries and their origin—conold.*

|   | Rivers.   | Tributaries.   | Origin.  |
|---|---|--|--|
| 6 | "Mandakini" meets the Alakananda at Rudra prayag—concluded.   | Damar<br>Pali<br>Gabhni<br>Byum<br>Paun<br>Dhurma<br>Lader<br>Jodh Ganga or Jahnavi<br>Vilangana           | ...<br>...<br>...<br>...<br>...<br>...<br>...<br>... |
| 7 | "Bhagirathi" meets the Alakananda at Deva prayag and forms the Ganges.  |  |  |
| 8 | "Nayar" meets the Ganges at Vyas Ghat.  | Pasin<br>Kota<br>Ira<br>Pan<br>Kul   | ...<br>...<br>...<br>...<br>...                      |
| 9 | "Ramganga" (Western) rises in Patti Lobha of Pargana Chandpur, passing through Ganai in Kumaon it re-enters Garhwal and flows through the Patti Dun and then turning south-eastwards it bursts through the outer range corresponding to the Siwaliks of Dehra Dun and enters the plains near Kalagarh fort south of the Kalagarh peak in Bijnor.<br>10, 11, 12. Hinul, Rawasan and Khoh rivers. | Receives numerous hill torrents on its both sides, and Mandiul, Palain and Sona streams on its right bank. | ...  |

For a description of the lakes in Garhwal we borrow the following from Mr. Walton's Gazetteer, Vol. XXXVI:—

**Lakes.** “This district contains a number of lakes, but the majority of them are of minor importance, such as Beni Tal, Sukha Tal, and Tarag Tal which are mere depressions of stagnant water situated on the ridges. More extensive lakes are to be found in the interior of the snowy range such as Satopant, Lakpal-ka-kund and Deo Tal, but they are not easily accessible. Until 1893 the largest lake was Diuri Tal above Ukhimath, a very picturesque sheet of water whence a perfect view can be obtained of the *Gandha Madan* peaks from base to summit. In that year, however, the Gohna or Durmi lake was formed and it is now by far the largest not only in the district but in the whole division. Notwithstanding the great mass of water poured down the valley in August 1894, it still measures nearly two miles long and half a mile in breadth at its widest point with an area of 400 acres, more than three times that of Naini Tal.

About two miles to the north-west of Ukhimath, a lake has been formed a few years ago by a landslide damming up the stream flowing down from Madmah-esu-wara, and is called Jagya Tal.

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## CHAPTER III.

### CLIMATE AND SCENERY.

By the term "climate," as Dr. Scott remarks in his work on meteorology, "is understood the combined effect of all the various phenomena embraced by meteorology, and which determines the suitability of various districts for the support of their respective fauna and flora. Beyond all doubt, the most important factor in these determinations is the temperature." The law of decrement of heat with ascent above sea level will render intelligible the statement of Herschel, that in ascending a mountain from the sea level to the limit of perpetual snow, we pass through the same series of climates, so far as temperature is concerned, which we should do by travelling from the same station to the polar regions of the globe ; and in a country where very great differences of level exist, we find every variety of climate arranged in zones according to latitude, and characterised by the vegetable productions appropriate to their habitual temperature. Dr. Parkes further shows that for India an ascent of 5,000 or 6,000 feet reduces the temperature to the English mean. These interpretations are applicable in judging the climate of Garhwal, because here in this country, there is a vast difference in temperature even within short distances. *e. g.*, between Srinagar and Pauri, which are at a distance of 8 miles from each other, the elevation of the former being 1,758 and of the latter 5,850 feet, respectively. Both of them are situated between the latitudes of

30° 13' and 30° 8' 59" whereas there is a vast difference between the climates of the two places. This leads to arranging the climate of this country by elevation and by the growth of certain kinds of plants peculiar to that elevation. For instance, mango, banyan and pipal thrive well up to the height of about 3,500 feet. The oak and rhododendron begin to grow above 4,500 feet and thrive well up to 6,000 feet. Hence we divide the climate of Garhwal into four classes, viz., (i) warm, (ii) temperate, (iii) cold, and (iv) glacial.

(a) *Warm climate*.—Garhwal Bhadbur, the Gangetic valley, including other river valleys, up to the elevation of about 4,000 feet above sea level, are very warm places in the summer. From April to the end of October, the climate is very insular. The temperature is high, atmosphere moist, hot and oppressive. Even at night a hot wind blows. The rainfall of these localities is variable, but 40" may be given as the mean. During the rains, the intercepted rank grass grows high, offering a breeding ground for mosquitoes, various sorts of fleas and insects which annoy the traveller and the inhabitants very much. Besides, during the rains and after, when decomposed vegetation begins to dry up, people suffer from malarial fever, skin affections and dysentery.

From November to March there is a slight decrease in temperature during the day; the pedestrian, however, requires an umbrella to protect himself; at night the temperature falls much owing to radiation, and hence the nights are chilly. Still the climate during these three or four months is recuperative.

(b) *Temperate climate* ranges from an elevation of 5,000 to 7,000 feet. The luxuriant growth of vegetation indicates it to be a region of health. The population within the bounds of this climate enjoy throughout the year much freedom from sickness.

From April to October, the temperature ranges from 60° to 80° in the shade. But the low-lying villages have a temperature approximating to the higher elevation of the warm climate. The wind is dry and cold, and the four seasons of the year are well marked.

The winter is not severe but bracing. Snow falls down to the height of 4,000 feet. The people work hard the whole day in winter as well as in summer in the fields without much injurious effects. In fact, the influence of this climate is beneficial. Many tropical birds migrate to these elevations in summer to recruit themselves from the effects of the scorching heat of the plains.

(c) *Cold climate* comprises within its boundaries, the localities situated within 8,000 and 10,000 feet elevation. The mean temperature of this region ranges from 40° to 50°. The rainfall is less. Snow falls are frequent in the winter. The favourite trees of the locality are kharsu (*quercus semi-carpifolia*), mauru thuner (the yew), raga and deodar. Very few corns are produced. The inhabitants are sturdy, of small stature, but of vigorous constitution. They live a comparatively long life, but have sluggish nervous power. Localities situated above an elevation of 9,000 feet are shunned by the people as a residence during the winter months.

(d) *Glacial climate*.—Mana and Niti are the extreme limits of human habitation. Owing to the astro-

nomical conditions there is a great disproportion between the length of days and nights here at different seasons of the year. In Mana and Niti, spring, during which the intensity of chill is mitigated, lasts but for a short time, and is succeeded by summer which assumes its plenitude in June and July. The temperature rises rapidly from several degrees below  $0^{\circ}$  to  $70^{\circ}$  or  $80^{\circ}$  in the shade at noon, and from  $90^{\circ}$  to  $110^{\circ}$  in the sun. Under the influence of prolonged days and increased temperature, the crop, sown in July, passes through all its phases with extreme rapidity and is harvested in September. From August rain and fog appear. Towards the end of September, the temperature becomes precarious, and the weather is subject to sudden and severe changes. A battle between the sun and clouds begins to rage now and then. The clouds have rather the best of it and occasional storms of sleet and snow begin. Heavy rains sometimes fall. Webb, during his visit in the beginning of June, found them to continue for seven nights and six days without intermission. "Thus the seasons of spring, summer and autumn are all comprised within five months from May to September inclusive, but" says Mr. Trail, an "interval of four months without a fall of snow is rare. Snow begins to fall about the end of September and continues to accumulate to the beginning of April. It is intensely cold during this period. Thaw then becomes predominant, though partial falls occur till even late in May. In open and level situations, unaffected by drifts or avalanches, the bed of snow reaches at its maximum depth from 6 to 12 feet, is wholly dissipated by the first week in June, in ravines and hollows; and it does not entirely disappear before the middle

of July." From December till the end of April the locality remains desolate, wrapped, as it were, in a quilt of pure white snow and without human habitation.

On the whole the climate of this country is remarkably favourable, mild, slightly humid but bracing. Mr. Batten speaks of the climate of Pargana Nagpur as quite European. The rainfall is comparatively heavy. Says Mr. Walton, "In the vicinity of high hills the rainfall is heavy, while at a distance from them the rainfall is light. Water-supply is from the natural sources and is ample everywhere in quantity and mostly healthy in quality. From March to the end of May and from October to the end of December the weather is delightful. And the panorama of snowclad peaks and other objects of interest can be viewed from commanding positions such as Dwari-Khal, Pauri, Konkala above Dubri Dhanpore, Nagnath and Dubri Tal.

The whole land is invested with a scenery of unspeakable grandeur, and of a magnificent variety. Poets like Kalidasa and Bhartrihari drank deep into the Himalayan scenery. Going from southern Garhwal, a traveller passes over terrific precipices, descends into deep ravines, and roams over romantic glens. He crosses many rivers of large volume, rests here and there under cool shades of a group of a variety of green trees, allays his thirst with the sweet, pure and cold water of the cascades, springs and

*mighty rivers and assuages his hunger and fatigue* by partaking of food produced in the country, comparatively very delicious to taste. He passes up by excellent road crossing here and there the stony beds of hill streams from which water is often carried by canals to irrigate the nicely arranged patches of cultivation. In addition to the above spectacle on mountain slopes and in valleys, the traveller, proceeding higher up, meets with groups of small villages consisting of stone built houses, reed made huts, thatched hamlets and cottages with rows of corn-fields, some smiling with green and others filled with crops of red and yellow millet, running in ribands of brilliant colour down the hillsides, imparting extreme pleasure to the mind and serenity to the vision. His intercourse with the majority of the hardy people there, whose dress, habits, manners and customs are still primitive and which differ from modern civilisation, ever fails to draw his sympathy towards them.

People coming from the parched and heated plains will be delighted to find the trees, plants and shrubs along the road which present a deep shade and lovely sight to their eyes. The deep valleys, slopes and ridges are fringed with tall and straight pines and other strange trees of gigantic size, imparting a peculiar look of wilderness to the deep ravines. From the bottom of these yawning chasms gush out streamlets hidden from the eye, make the ravines resound with the noise of many waters, as they rush turbulently over the boulders below.

In the higher regions, above 9000 feet, one would everywhere find stately vistas and charming flowerage to relieve the monotony of his hard journey.

The atmosphere is saturated with perfumed odours. "And on certain summits the vision enjoys perfect freedom; unimpeded, it travels far and wide on all sides, no hills to stand in its way, no angry clouds to mar its course. Exuberant flowers make almost the whole of the way a veritable field of cloth of gold. Yellow, blue and purple flowers are met with in wild plenty. Lots of lilies, violets, daisies and tulips of different varieties; guggal, dhoop, mamira, mitha telia, salad-misri, and other herbs with leaves of lovely tints; saffron and other plants exhaling exceedingly sweet scent; and lordly brahma kanwal (lotus) with its calyx filled with fine icicles of frost; all these things make these mountains a pleasure garden worthy of the Lord of Earth and Heaven (Rama)."

Thus a traveller passing through the several parganas in Upper Garhwal above Rudra prayag, will observe that at every step it displays marvellous beauty, colour and shape—the handiwork of the Devine Artist. The land is filled by the Creator with objects on scale entirely commensurate with its bold outlines. The Rishis of yore were extremely conscious of the beauty of this part of Garhwal. Scenery to the primitive Aryans was an inspiration. They admired its beauty, inhaled its fragrance, adored its symmetry and colour and through them they shared the depth and overflow of deific goodness.

Mr. Batten has beautifully described the scenery of Upper Garhwal, and the following extracts have been borrowed from his long articles quoted in the Atkinsons Himalayan Gazette: Vol. III. He writes:— "Nagpur will never be forgotten by those who have wandered amongst the forest of Tung Nath range or who have

spent a day on the banks of Diuri Tal. All through Upper Putties there are bits of scenery unsurpassed for their grandeur and beauty and most of which are easily accessible to the ordinary traveller. In short, the scenery of the whole tract is highly beautiful."

Chandra Sila (summit of Tung Nath), about three miles above Chopta (12,071 feet), though bleak in forest, when clear of clouds, exhibits an extensive and picturesque view of the whole of Garhwal; the clusters of snowy peaks to the north, east and west, and the great block of rocky peaks of the Garhwal ranges to the south appear close at hand. Below the temple the traveller's eyes will meet, for miles, nothing but the dark green glittering foliage of the deep forests, which in March and April are further decorated to an inconceivable state of gorgeous splendor, by the bright crimson flowers of myriads of rhododendron.

"Diuri Tal measures  $400 \times 250 \times 66$ , and is 8,000 feet above the sea level, seven miles to the north-east of Ukhimath. It is situated on the range of the hills, surrounded on three sides by fine deep forests consisting of pines, oaks, rhododendrons and other trees. The whole jungle is magnificent in appearance. The day I reached there it was snowing and young trees were laid prostrate under the weight of snow, the lake was frozen over to the depth of about two inches. There was no human habitation, and the place looked a veritable wilderness. The next morning when the sun appeared, the Chaukhamba and many other peaks extending as far as Kedar Nath seemed covered with new quilt of snow, as if close at hand. The whole scenery was so exquisite that one



could not get tired of gazing at it for hours. I think a person who has a subdued settled despair in his mind would all of a sudden unexpectedly feel a kind of bounding and exalting cheerfulness which will be imparted to his frame by the scenery of Duiiri Tal."

The view of the Vishnu Ganga valley which commences from the meeting of the waters of Vishnu and Dhauli rivers at Vishnu prayag represents a magnificent sight ; in character both waters differ from each other, both have narrow channels, but Dhauli is more precipitous and confined. The scenery of this prayag has no forest to adorn it ; everything exhibits a wild and rugged appearance.

Above the Vishnu paryag, the glen for seven or eight miles has an awe-inspiring appearance. On either side it has terrific defiles, the steep sides of which stretch above for miles, and their unfathomable ravines appear as if they have been fashioned by all the earthquakes and other convulsions the world has ever experienced. From Pandukeshar upwards to Hanuman Chutti the valley is well open and snow-capped mountains can be seen ; in parts it is well wooded and its scenery is pleasing. On either bank of the river cultivated fields filled with young amaranthus, and small villages dotted along near the woods and streamlets present a magnificent appearance. Above Hanuman Chutti the valley is devoid of vegetation, the sacred shrines of Badri Nath is situated in an open place of this valley. It is about two miles long and one mile broad. The Vishnu Ganga flows in the centre of the valley, the town is situated on the right bank of the river, and is equidistant from two mountains of immense height,

one towering to the east and the other to the west of Badri Nath, and are called Nar and Narain, named after two great Rishis practising penance. This valley is devoid of arboreal vegetation, but the slopes of the hills are covered with various species of flowers of sweet fragrance and fine grass and heather. The latter have a peculiar sickly scent, which causes faintness and adds to the difficulty of climbing, due to a rarified atmosphere. With some people, especially those of nervous temperament, who are peculiarly subject to its influence, this faintness becomes overpowering.

Nothing can surpass the desolation of the Saraswati valley from a few miles above Mana to the pass. It is stated that nearly the whole of this valley was once filled with glaciers, and we now see almost everywhere the remains of the ancient moraines in the accumulations of fragments of rock and debris which cover the bottom and the sides of the valley.

Mr. Mumm examined the passage of this river behind Ghandoli village and describes the gorge to be an extraordinary place, reminding one of that of the Tamina at Pfaffor, though on a much smaller scale. The water falls through deep recesses, which even the midday sun can scarcely reach, and then descends in a channel so narrow that it is bridged by blocks of stone in four places within a distance of 150-200 yards. The lowest of these natural bridges, slightly assisted by art, provides the regular way of getting across the river from the upper village to Vasoodhara about two miles from Mana on a minor stream; there is a cataract, one complete unbroken cascade of a thousand feet in height.

Let us pass now to the scenery of the valley of the Western Dhauli. Mr. Batten writes:—"Near Joshi Math and the whole way to the junction of the Rini river, which comes from the north-west face of Nanda Devi, this glen is characterised by the most exquisite scenery, the southern mountain sloping down to the river covered by forests of *quercus semicarpifolia*, *rosa webbiana* (wild rose), yew, horse chestnut, alder, poplars, and elms, intercepted with pretty villages of which the chief ornaments are the fields of red marsa, a species of *amaranthus*; while the high craggy northern mountains and peaks, that form the separating ridge between Badri Nath and Niti, come down to the Dhauli in the most terrific precipices. Above the Rini, both sides of the glen assume the regular Himalayan features of wild sublimity, although villages are everywhere perched upon seemingly inaccessible heights. The river remains broad and deep, though often broken into cataracts. There is a very dreary glen without villages for ten or twelve miles separating Upper from Lower Painkhanda. After leaving the oaks and elms, etc., the wood becomes entirely cypress, and from summit to base of the mountains no other tree is seen. The larger trees frequently attain an enormous size, some of them having a girth of 27 feet. One measured by Major Garstin at Wan had a girth of 38 feet, and another measured by Mr. Mumm at Juma Gwar had a girth of 45 feet. At Juma, Upper Painkhanda is entered, and then the scenery, retaining all its grandeur also becomes exquisitely lovely. Villages of the true Swiss character are seen over every open spot, surrounded by cedar trees and overhung by crags of the most stupendous

character, wooded up to the snow which shines on their summits, with similiar trees and birch, which latter as well as the sycamores have at this season the true autumnal tint, contrasting finely with the dark branches of the deodar."

"From Malari," writes Mr. Batten, "we marched up a glen of the most beautiful kind, the deodar trees (all of spreading shape) coming down to the water's 'edge,' and now beginning to be mingled with chitta pines (*pinus excelsa*) not unlike the chir at a distance and raga firs (*abeiss webbiana*). Passing a set of big villages then entered Bampa, Gam Sali, etc., all varying in elevation from the sea from 10,200 to 11,000 and upwards, the highest of which is Niti. At Bampa the deodars end, and no other tree is seen save birch and *pinus excelsa*, but the ground is covered, as well as the surrounding heights, with beds of grand cypress, goose-berries, currants, furze, webb rose, sweet brier, and juniper."

There are Girthi and Rini Ganga valleys in the Western Dhauli tract, which are devoid of human habitation and situated amid perhaps the most savage and desolate tract in the Himlayas. These valleys are packed with astonishing scenery. Rishi valley in addition exhibits full view of Nanda Devi, standing quite alone like a white cloud in the horizon, amidst a mass of snow-attired summits of Trisul of grand exquisite sight.

Contrasted with the scenery of the Alps, the snowy range of Garhwal hardly fails to kindle enthusiasm from whatever point it is viewed. An English traveller writes : "I have seen the Bernese Overland view of the Alps, with all its glorious array of peaks from the dome of Mont Blanc to the cliffs of the

fair Jungfran, and have dwelt under the shadow of Fusi-yama cone in Japan, but all these must be put together to equal the colossal magnificence of these Garhwal imperial Himalayan peaks.

“Miles of this icy tract in the Upper Garhwal are inaccessible from any direction and the awful silence and solitude of these trackless wastes of snow will ever remain unbroken. Portions of the Himalayas have been explored by the venturesome travellers, but the larger part must ever remain impregnable.”

The Mahabharata narrates that the Pandavas in their pilgrimage to the Northern Tirthas visited Kalsila and the Mandara where Kuvera lives; there they treaded on ground inaccessible to mankind, and visited the Gandha Madan (Chaukhamba) and Kailash mountains and the Badri tree at the Nar Narain Ashram. Again, when the Pandavas retired from worldly affairs it is said in the epic that Yudhistira and his dog were both bodily translated to the Svargarohini peak above Kedar Nath. How far it is true, we leave it to our readers to judge.

The scenery of Pindar valley in Chandpur all along from its source to its confluence with the Alaknanda at Karana prayag is most picturesque and almost in every mile has some beautiful bits where wood, water, forest, hill and rocks vie with each other in contributing to the general sublimity of nature here visible. Dhanpur range is another place in Chandpur noted for its picturesque scenery.

Ramini in Dasoli, Birahganga valley, several spots in Nandakini valley, Sukhä Tal, Chijouligad valley in Badhan, are most picturesque in scenery. The charms

of Ramini and Kuari pass invite the attention of many an English traveller, Lord Curzon having visited Ramini in 1903.

All the European travellers have described with kindling enthusiasm the scenery of this country, which, if once seen, leaves an impression that can never be equalled or effaced.

However, the remarks on Himalayan scenery made by Mr. Pilgrim are so apt and beautiful that we cannot refrain from transcribing them here.

Says Mr. Pilgrim : " We had a view of the great snowy range from Pawali pass, the parallel of which I suppose the world could not produce. We saw before us, like a turreted wall of marble, of which the dimensions seemed immeasurable, the mass of mountains from which the Jumna has its source, called Junnotri, also Gangotri, Kedar Nath and Badri Nath, and the peaks beyond them to the eastward ; all these we saw spread out like a panorama, and under peculiarly favourable circumstances, the repeated falls of snow having clothed them in their winter raiment of the most dazzling white.

" We were traversing one of the spurs of the huge mass itself ; and every step we took shewed us how nearly we had approached the threshold of everlasting winter. The reflections induced by the gorgeous spectacle are not to be described ; eloquence itself, under the highest powers of language, seems but poverty in assisting to convey to the mind any adequate impression of its astounding magnificence. All the mountains seem as if chained together, supporting each other in making a simultaneous effort to

hide their heads in the heavens. This is the gigantic barrier which baffles the progress of the very elements themselves ; it forms the boundary line which limits the tropical season of India ; beyond it the rains do not extend, and the seasons of the temperate zone are at once established on the northern face of this line of towering peaks. Your admiration is more intense, when you recollect that you have before you, at one glance, the fountain heads of almost all the rivers which at once constitute India an agricultural as well as a commercial nation of first-rate importance. From these snowy mountains rise on one side the Jumna, the Ganges and the Kallee, and on the other side the Sutledge, the Indus and Brahmaputra ; it is not, therefore, wonderful, that the natives of India should have deified them by making them the residence of their gods ; in any country they must have been looked upon with feelings bordering on veneration, and I have often thought of Johnson's lines which are so applicable to a spectacle like this. It is indeed—

‘ Mighty and pure and fit to make

The rampart of a Godhead dwelling.’

“ On it the eye never wearies to dwell—it affords a kind of enjoyment which, springing from the purest of all sources, the fountain head of Nature, has a tendency to elevate the feelings of the mind, and to exclude from it the working of all ungenerous and turbulent passions. You cannot help feeling as if partially elevated above mortality ; the pride and the pomp, and the power of man seem to lie under your feet ; and yet a feeling from time to time creeps over you, of shrinking from your own insignificance,

in the presence of such examples of the stupendous might and power of the great Architect of the universe. What an atom in its system a human being appears ; and how humiliated you feel, at having never expected that the gratification of your insignificant desires and wishes could have been like anything else but dust in the balance, to the Creator of works like these. The heart, in which such associations could not be awakened, must be hard indeed ; and I indulged in them, as I have ever done amidst the scenery of mountaineous countries—their influence tend to soften the memory of many pains and sorrows, and on this occasion they served to bury for a time in forgetfulness, causes which had combined to induce my becoming a wanderer for a second time, after many years amidst these mysterious scenes of Nature's desolation."

In the whole length and breadth of India, the land of Garhwal with its manifold beauties alone could appeal to the minds of the earlier Rishis of India that here with such climate, scenery and solitude, they could develop a very peculiar civilization in which the spiritual and mental got the upperhand of the physical and which would defy the ravages of time. And, to say the truth, if the evolution of the mind be the sole and cardinal object of man's existence in this world below, the tendency of the Hindu Rishis will certainly coincide with the object. So that the goal of the Rishis of yore was only to hold communion with the Infinite existence, the transcendental mind and thus enjoy supreme bliss. From this high level of thought, the present sacred literature of the Hindus was derived and handed down to posterity, *i.e.*, science, poetry, astronomy, physics,



*history and mythology, etc. All these are detailed in the Mahabharata, composed by Vyas Muni in this land. Thus Garhwal stands a landmark in the history of the spiritual and secular civilization of India, like a giant primeval tree, spreading its branches on all sides to the nooks and corners of India and losing its top in the Himalayas, the fairest without a rival.*

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## CHAPTER IV.

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### LAND.

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Long before the Aryan occupation of the Gangetic valley, Garhwal was perhaps a dense jungle, a habitat of wild beasts, or peopled, if at all, by tribes akin to the Gonds, Bhils of the Vindya Mountains or Rajis of the Kumaun jungle. They dwelt in the southern part of the country.

In the Himalayan tracts Garhwal stands pre-eminent in its distinctive physical features. It is peculiarly shut out from the surrounding countries by impregnable mountain barriers, and enjoyed a seclusion all its own. Facilities for traffic were few, and means of communication, where they existed, were tardy and risky. In configuration it stands singular, in the whole Himalayan region. The whole land is intercepted with terrible gorges, formed by the erosion of rivers. The country is divided into separate ranges and these are again cut off by the beds of many streams. It is a chaotic mass of high mountains, hills, and deep gorges and dark blue ranges rising one above another, and behind all piled up into the sky the snowy peaks of the Himalayas.

Wide open valleys are non-existent and only a few dells, on the river banks and dales down on the low-lying hills are met with here and there. Garhwal contains no level expanse to suit agricultural pursuits.

Nature fashioned the land in a way that offers attraction to men leading a spiritual life and living in a moral and spiritual atmosphere. The country for ages came to be regarded as the fountain head of Hindu spiritual civilization. Our description in the first chapter will show that the land has been looked upon as the cradle of the illustrious Aryan holy sages of yore, passing their days in caves and hermitages in devout contemplation of the Almighty and practising a rigid austerity and self-abnegation. There is still a living proof of hermit life in Garhwal at Hrishikesh, where ascetics in hundreds, some of them scholars of the western school, are practising the pursuit of divine knowledge. These hermitages are said to have been once scattered on pretty sites along the upper course of the Alaknanda and other rivers.

That country too is surpassingly beautiful. It abounds in running waters like Garhwal and is furnished with the most bracing climate. It is rich in forests, and the rainfall here is plentiful and well distributed. In all respects Nature has lavished its bounties on the land, save that it has been cruel in depriving the country of lands suitable for cultivation. The aforesaid favourable agencies would, however, have in no way allowed it to remain barren for ever. The successive waves of Aryan emigration extended cultivation on the slopes of the hills by cutting fields supported by stone-built walls, and converted worthless spots into gardens; the same system of agriculture has been pursued by the present generation in Garhwal.

Now we come to an important point, which must carefully be borne in mind. There are certain

circumstances in which Garhwal soil suffers more or less from external agencies. When the monsoon sets in with vigour, it makes the petty torrents swell to abnormal size and all the little rills and rivulets are increased in proportion. Hundreds of new springs burst out in the cultivated area, and in other places where there had not been the slightest trace of them in the summer, and the effect is that many terraces of fields give way, destroying young crops underneath. Fertility of the soil is further yearly washed away by the heavy rains and the standing crop uses up the active food of one or more particular kinds, with the result that the next crop cannot get enough nourishment.

Fields on the slanting ground suffer more from exhaustion than a soil on level ground. Now it has been seen that *ukhar* land, which I will mention later on, is more apt to be worn out and, after each crop, it requires the artificial addition to it of the materials it has lost so as to render it fertile enough for the next crop.

For these reasons the greater portion of arable land invites the careful attention of zamindars for its fertility being replenished. They have carefully to conserve the manure, which is the first and most essential requisite of cultivation, and, for its proper supply, they should store green and dry leaves largely.

The Garhwali cultivator is fairly competent in his profession; he takes to cultivation with a skill which only the accumulated experience of ages can generate in a person who follows a hereditary calling.

To prevent further exhaustion, he leaves part of his exhausted land to rest for a few months in the winter, in order that natural agencies such as mild rain, snow and frost may act on it. He thus gets the opportunity of cultivating properly at his ease the land left fallow for the successful growth of the most valuable succeeding crops. The soil too gets a round of crops, which is absolutely necessary from the agricultural standpoint. The prosperity, strictly speaking, of a zamindar in Garhwal, depends entirely on his thoroughly repairing his land, and applying the great remedy of "manure" to the extent that the exhaustion has been brought about.

It is necessary for us to point out that in Garhwal only the farm yard manure is used. It is prepared twice a year, viz—in summer and in winter. The summer manure consists of green leaves and grass, etc., as also the litter which has been trampled upon by the cattle in the cow-shed and mixed with their excrements heaped up in a pit in which it is made to rot and ferment. This manure, rich as it is, is very cumbersome to be taken out to the fields. The winter manure is moulded from dry leaves and subjected to rot in the manner described above and is used for the rice crop.

The next point to be considered is the classification of land and the methods of agriculture adopted in this country. The local classification of land, irrespective of its composition, is irrigated (*sera*) and non-irrigated (*ukhar*). The difference between both the soils, in respect of irrigation, is that the former is richer than the latter. But generally

speaking, some of the *ukhar* land situated in a warmer valley near a water-course yields very nearly to *sera*. The crops have two principal classifications, *i. e.*, *kharif* and *rabi*. The former comprises two different crops, (*a*) rice, (*b*) manduwa, consisting of legumes. This crop is widely cultivated and is most important to the zamindar; for it presents a variety of foodstuffs to him and plenty of fodder to his cattle.

This shows that a zamindar in Garhwal gathers three crops in a year. It will be appropriate now to describe briefly the principal crops of the country. As soon as the winter rains are over and the climate becomes favourable, the farmer's attention is drawn to his implements (all primitive). But actual cultivation begins with Sri Panchami (New Year's day) which generally falls sometime in the beginning of March. The fields are nicely cleared of shrubs, weeds, and grass; in some villages, the roots of previous crops are taken out and gathered into heaps and burned when dry. The fields are now ploughed and left a few days to be acted upon by natural agencies; on the other hand the necessary repairs are completed by the zamindar. Now the best fields are taken in hand for the rice crop, as it is necessary to make the ground quite loose to a good depth to allow its roots to penetrate easily in search of nourishment. Hence it is necessary to plough twice and break down large lumps and hard clod partly with a wooden mallet and partly by *jol* (a sort of drag) to make the land finer and even. After this the seeds of paddy mixed with sesamum are scattered over the ground which is ploughed

for a third time, the ridges being made even with a flat piece of wood (*chapa*). *Jhangora*, *kangni*, and *manduwa* only require ploughing twice. When the crops have grown up to the height of a few inches from the ground the harrow (*dandala*) is applied to them. Paddy is weeded thrice, *manduwa* twice, *jhangora* once, until the crop begins to come into ear.

We have now to speak of the *manduwa* crop. Immediately the *rabi* crop has been cut in April and May the fields with the stumps, roots, grass, etc., are ploughed in, which, when rotten in the soil, supply valuable food for the crop which follows. It is to be remembered that no farm yard manure is supplied to this crop as the green manure ploughed in, is considered to be sufficient. The common practice is to sow the seeds of *manduwa* mixed with a variety of legumes and pulses, immediately after ploughing, while the freshly turned up soil is still damp. The *jol* is rolled over it to press the earth close to the seed. When the plants have grown up a few inches higher above the ground the harrow is employed in the manner described above, it loosens the soil and gathers the stumps and weeds into heaps which are allowed to remain in the fields to be further acted upon by the rains. This crop produces the largest amount of coarse food for man and beast for a trivial expense.

We will sketch the manner in which the *rabi* crop is cultivated in Garhwal. Two varieties are harvested, the much cultivated is red wheat also called bearded, as it grows well in poorer soils and in colder places, besides this, the wild beasts and

birds do not cause so much harm to this variety, as they help themselves freely to fruit and seeds of white wheat. The white (smooth) wheat grows well in the irrigated soil rich in clay loam. But it has been seen that in the milder zones of this country, it grows well up on any good fertile soil, all over the district up to the height of 6,000 feet, provided that the soil is well manured and situated in a warm locality.

*Rabi* sowing follows after harvesting the rice crop. In October the rice crop is cut, the fields are left ploughed for a few weeks, during which time the cut stalks of paddy shoot up in fresh stumps which are then ploughed in and cattle are allowed to trample upon the fields. In heavy clay soils the manure is applied in a fresh state and over it the seeds are sown in the manner described above and ploughed a second time and finished by harrowing over by the *jol*. On light sandy soils, well rotted manure is spread when the crop has grown up a few inches from the ground; after this wheat does not bother the zamindar till harvest time, which varies in Garhwal from April to the end of May according to the altitude of the place.

It is cut before the grain is dead ripe. The yield and the quality of wheat produced in this district are equal to those of the best soil in the plains.

This is one of the most valuable crops, as the poor Garhwali relies much on this crop for the means of paying his revenue to the Sarkar and defraying the expenses for necessities for his family in the winter. The staple food of the people in Garhwal will be described hereafter; although it may be casually mentioned that wheat and rice are a luxury



in Garhwal. The greater portion of them is disposed of in the marts.

Garhwal soil is suitable for all the cultivated plants of the plains, with the exception of a few. The two principal crops, *kharif* and *rabi*, are cultivated up to the height of 7,000 feet. Amaranthus and china grow well up to 8,000 feet, whereas buckwheat and barley can be grown successfully in a severe climate and on lands lying high above the sea, such as Niti and Mana. Only one crop is produced in those localities.

Garhwal, from ancient times, seems to have been an agricultural country. It flourished well till the beginning of the nineteenth century, when a great decline took place in its organisation on account of the barbarous rule of the Gurkhas which, fortunately, had a short life of twelve years. Their successor, the British Government, in 1815, introduced a new system of tenantry, bestowing a sort of proprietary right on the peasants and established easy means of traffic. Under such sound organisation agriculture has received a great stimulus.

The cultivation of hemp is carried on in Parganas Chandpur and Dhajuli Rath, where an excellent quality of the stuff is produced. The fibre of the hemp is utilised in making cordage as also a kind of coarse cloth (*bhangela*) which is a very economical dress of the people of Chandpur, Dhanpur, Kandar Seun, and Ghurdur Seun. Should these people be persuaded to cultivate *sisal* hemp which is a better stuff and clear the fibre with a decorticator, it would be a paying business to the people and to the State. There is very little cotton grown in this district now,

although some thirty years back it was cultivated fairly well.

Under the mild sway of Great Britain, which has brought foreign invasion and internal feuds to an end and made provisional arrangements against famine with a paternal care, the population of Garhwal has increased considerably. The slopes of the hills are now seen smiling with skilfully cultivated and picturesque rows of corn-fields. More lands are in process of reclamation from the very beasts which once occupied the place of men. Hamlets, huts, and cow-sheds now stand and villages have sprung up in places which formerly were waste lands. The demand for waste land seems to be increasing yearly in proportion as the ancestral property is being partitioned, and the population increasing. However, in spite of the scarcity of land referred to above, Nature has bestowed a great yielding power upon the soil of this country by fitting the land with brooks of water, fountains and rivulets, so that wherever possible water can be secured for irrigation. In places near the snowy ranges, in the vicinity of the rivers, sufficient moisture is obtainable for the crops, and little irrigation is required. Therefore, in most parts of the district, the cultivator has little need to observe the signs of the sky. But in Southern Garhwal, where some of the parganas are bleak in vegetation and deficient in water supply, and in the parts of the country situated far from the snowy peaks and rivers, the people suffer more or less from scanty production, but have facilities to obtain grain from the plains. On the whole the crops in Garhwal can never altogether fail, scarcity in one part of the country

*being made up by abundance in another. Garhwal, in this way, rarely suffers from the pinch of real famine. The avocation of the majority of the inhabitants being cultivation, they have inherited patience, endurance and intelligence sufficient to carry on their profession well, but still on primitive lines. Should modern improved agricultural methods be adopted and sufficient holding granted to each cultivator, we can dare say that the land would be extraordinarily capable of producing an endless variety of grain, oil-seeds, vegetables and fruits. The fertility of the soil can be judged from the very fact that on the surface of the earth in the hills from the bottom to the top, wherever there is any depth of soil from Garhwal Bhabur to the base of the snow-covered peaks, vegetation in its richest forms and most luxuriant plenty has been springing up.*

As the population within the last 100 years of the British rule has become nearly fourfold, the cultivation of the land has also undergone a proportional increase. With this phenomenal growth of population the demand for land will continue till arable land becomes an object of scarcity. It will then be a question of prime importance for the State to consider into what other channels the activities of the increasing tide of the population in this country may be turned.

The soil seems to be favourable in every respect for the cultivation of fruits. But up to the present day there has been no inclination on the part of the zamindars towards such an important industry. It would be more profitable for a zamindar

to take up horticulture along with agriculture. *There is as much demand for fruits and vegetables as for corn on the pilgrim road from Hardwar to the sacred shrines of Badri Nath and Kedar Nath.* Modern science and experience have both shown that a zamindar of a small holding can produce much by introducing improved methods of cultivation, improved agricultural implements, and improved seeds. There is also a well-known local adage to this effect: "*Zamin karni ghatai ke, Vyapar karna badhai ke.*" And for this development the introduction of the co-operative credit panchayat in Garhwal is of the utmost importance, for the zamindars in this country are poor and their individual efforts would not allow them to buy improved implements. Further, the means of transport also require to be improved.

Containing as Garhwal does, every description of climate from that of the tropical heat of the vertical sun to the freezing cold of the ice-bound Himalayas, there is, then, the requisite heat and moisture to cover the land with the softest carpet of the brightest green. The whole country, with the exception of certain parganas in the centre of the district, is rich in vegetation. Beautifully wooded tracts, boasting of a variety of elegant trees abound here and there. All species of trees and plants grow at one or the other of the successive zones. To describe it briefly, let us begin from Garhwal Bhabur, the extreme south end of the country, and its adjacent hills, the slopes and tops of which abound in tropical forest, comprising various gigantic and graceful trees.

The undermentioned trees mingled here and there with pipal (*ficus religiosa*) and banyan (*ficus indica*) figure most prominently in those parts :—

Sal (*shorea robusta*),

Haldu (*adina cordifolia*), -

Dhauri (*lagerstræmia parviflora*),

Tun (*cedrela tuna*),

Asin (*terminalia tomentosa*),

Sisham (*dalbergia sisu*).

The forest is often so densely intercepted with bamboo, catechu, cinnamon and tall grass that it often renders it impenetrable, besides making it a dismal wilderness. Wild beasts are plentiful.

\* Higher up, above Devaprayag and the Alaknanda valley, the bases, slopes, gorges and tops of the hills up to the height of 3,500 feet, are well clothed with noble trees, such as *pinus longifolia*, *shorea robusta*, catechu, *terminalia bellerica*, *terminalia chebula*, *casia fistula*, eagle marmeloe, *bauhinia* and dhak. The last two, when in bloom, in the hot months with their elegant flowers, here and there in the midst of the forest, serve as a nice decoration to it. On the other hand, various creepers, some of them having green broad foliage twining round the trees and forming elegant porches, are to be seen. Their leaves, when plucked, do not fade for days together. In low-lying warm valleys beautiful mango groves, kingly pipal, towering banyan and jamun are found here and there, furnishing shady retreats in the hot season.

Above a height of 4,000 feet, sub-tropical growth succeeds to the vegetation described above. Except *pinus longifolia*, which thrives well up to an elevation of 7,000 feet, the principal trees are oak, rhododendron, polentilla, ayar, utis, and crab apple. Here and there mingled walnut chestnut in shady places with their charming foliage, the rhododendron, and crab apple begin to bloom in the hot weather, or, more properly speaking, from February onwards. The crimson flowers of the former and elegant bunches of white flowers of the latter, present a beautiful scenery and a pleasing spectacle to the eyes. During the same period yellow jasmine too with its elegant and graceful foliage and sweet-scented flowers enhance the beauty of the forest.

The richest vegetation is to be found between the elevation of 7,000 feet and 10,000 feet. Except the rocky cliffs, the whole earth is clothed with feathery fern—"ornament of the forest glade"—mosses, creepers, and innumerable varieties of flowers of richest hue, in whose vases dew sleeps like pearl in an ocean shell. In the rainy season and after, those places are in their great glory. They are the pleasure garden of the Greatest, a choice of the philosophers, and impart a feeling of much delight and exhilaration to the human being who is fortunate enough to visit them in the season.

The conspicuous plants of this region are : *quercus delatata*, *quercus cini*, *corpifolia*, sycamar, silver fir, cedar, yew, juniper. Cypress and deodar grow above 11,000 feet. Birch does not associate with any of these plants and grows at an elevation of

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12,000 feet or above and is generally of stunted growth.

Garhwal forest is well supplied with delicious fruits, for example, kaifal (polentilla), mel (crab apple), akhrot (walnut), timla (figs), kuronda (carissa carandas), jamun, umra, ber, mulberry, kingor (barberry), the rasp and black berry. In the region of ever-winter, kapasi (hazel), currant, goose berry, and medlar are common.

Mango, pomegranate, plantain, lemon, sweet lemon, orange, guava, peach and apricot trees are common in the district where they can grow.

Some of the shrubs, such as tairu, manghau and bemru, afford edible roots in plenty.

Seeds, flowers, leaves, stalks and roots of various trees and shrubs are said to possess medicinal properties. Garhwal from time immemorial has taken a high place among Indian districts by contributing many medicines to Charak, Susruta, Bag-Bhatta and other ancient Vaidas. The four magic herbs shedding light at night, as Kalidas describes them, were carried down by Hanuman (wind god) from Mount Dronagiri in Garhwal to Lanka (Ceylon) when Lakshmana, the younger brother of Rama, was almost on his death bed, pierced by the poisonous arrows of Indarjit, the son of the ten-headed Rakshasha (Ravana).

From what we have said of the climatic condition prevailing in this

#### **Animals.**

country, it needs no prophet to infer that the fauna here is very rich and varied. The tiger, elephant, panther, hyena, wolf, sambar-deer, buck or black deer, spotted deer, and stag

are found in Bhabur and its adjacent jungle Patli-Dun. Wild boar, black bear, leopard and the two species of small deer, *viz.*, ghwir or wild goat, kakar or barking deer, jackal, fox, titrwala, rabbit, porcupine, monkey and black-faced monkey (langur) are found abundantly in every part of the country; wherever available, they find a retreat in the jungle or the ravines. Reindeer (jadau) is found in the forests of Tung Nath, Raksi, Chopta, Diuri Tal and Basuki. Musk deer (kastura), mountain sheep (thar), mountain stag (barar) and ghurol are found near the snowy ranges towards Mana and Niti and other higher regions of the country, especially in Painkhanda and Nagpur. The musk deer (kastura) inhabits above 9,000 feet; the male has the musk pod on his navel. Thar is a handsome beast, the male having beautiful horns of 12 or 13 inches long, whereas barar has thick horns of five or six inches in length. The tiger is also found in the forests of Chandpur, Kandar-syun and Dudatoli. It occasionally reaches the thick forests of Basuki and Tung Nath, and even visits the snowy ranges towards Pawalee pass, Kedar Nath. The wild dog (kok), a very dangerous animal, is also to be met with here and there in packs.

Insects and reptiles are found in a diversity that defies classification and baffles scrutiny.

Garhwal is very rich in orinithology; members of many families of the Indian birds and some of the foreign species pay us a visit in the summer and autumn. Every species haunts its own particular favourite elevation, ranging from 4,000 to 10,000 feet. For an exmample, white-cheeked bul-bul is common up



to the height of 7,000 feet; minivits live higher up; some of its species is said to have been observed at the height of 10,000 feet. The Himalayan whistling thrush has a peculiar liking of frequenting the banks of hill streams. The chief birds of Garhwal are mentioned below:—

|                                |                             |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Himalayan house swallow.       | Bul-bul.                    |
| Black-headed jay.              | Minivit.                    |
| Yellow-cheeked tit.            | Flycatcher.                 |
| White-crested laughing thrush. | Himalayan whistling thrush. |
| Paradise whydah.               | Fincher.                    |
| Warbler.                       | Wood-pecker.                |
| Pied wag tail.                 | King fisher.                |
| Lark.                          | Cuckoo.                     |
| Hoopoe.                        | Parrot.                     |
| Swift.                         | Dove.                       |
| Pegion.                        | Hill mainah.                |
| Magpie.                        |                             |

The majority of these little creatures are to be found between the altitudes of 4,000 and 6,000 feet. They make our forests echo with their sweet multifarious notes which impart much delight. Some of them are delicate songsters, among them fincher, warbler and wag tail are the most melodious, but they abide here only for two summer months; after that, either they become mute or shift to other drier places.

The cuckoo, dove, and some other birds are remarkable for the volume of their sounds. The Himalayan whistling bird sings a very beautiful whistling song, which is begun very early in the morning and is very pleasing to the ear.

Let us say something of their plumage. If you examine every species attentively it will be seen

that they vie with each other in contributing to the visible sublimity of Nature. For instance, the paradise whydah has a pale brown plumage with dark streaks, the crown of the head being black with a few broad streaks of a light colour. The cock has a tail twice the length of his whole body which droops in a graceful curve and gives him a very distinguished appearance. It is amusing to see him, when on the ground he stretches his big tail to keep it out of the dirt. Another illustration is the wood-pecker, which has feathers of gorgeous colours, the back being of a golden hue, while the face, neck, and under parts are marked with black and white, and a flaming scarlet crest adorns the back of the head. The last but not the least are the two other denizens of Himalayan forests, *viz.*, peacock and moonal. Both surpass all the other birds in their gorgeous plumage; as regards their habitation they are quite the reverse of each other; the former does not range above 1,500 feet, whereas the latter would not thrive below 7,000 feet. For, "the great pride the peacock takes in displaying its gorgeous plumage." The bird, it is stated, was taken by Alexander the Great from India to Greece, where it was exhibited at the beginning of each month to the men and women of Athens who were lovers of the beautiful. Had the moonal, the ornament of Tung Nath, Pawali, Kawari and Ramini forests, been brought to the notice of Alexander, what wonder this magnificent golden pheasant would have similarly attracted the attention of the Athenians!

There are a number of other homely birds in Garhwal, the principal of them being eagle, vulture, crow, hawk, wood-cock, and pegin; among pheasants, chikor, titar, fowl, and quail, etc., are plentiful.

On the whole they are useful creatures ; most of them cause no harm to us but render good service to our corps by destroying insects which would otherwise prove injurious to the harvest. Some, as house sparrows, larks, parrots and finchers, assemble in very large flocks and destroy the sprouting corns of *kangni*, *china*, *sáwán* and *jowar*, etc.

Garhwal is anything but rich in mineral products.

#### **Minerals.**

Some time ago a few mines of copper were worked at Pokhri in Nagpur and Dobri and Dhanpur in Dhanpur. They have, however, now been abandoned. In Nagpur there are several places where iron ore is to be found, but the iron industry in the district is still in its infancy. Formerly, the local mines used to meet the mineral requirements of the district, but copper and iron are now mainly imported from the plains.

Auriferous sands are found on the banks of the Alaknanda and Mandakini, a fact which might account for the belief on the part of the ancient Aryans that Mount Meru, the mythological source of the Ganges, must have been made of gold. That this Shastric hyperbole might have a grain of truth in it, who can say? And no one would perhaps wonder if the efforts of modern explorers and geologists were crowned with success in their exploitations for gold and other precious stones in this holy and celestial land.

*Shilajit* or iron alum, the well-known Ayurvedic medicine, abounds on the rocks of the higher regions in Upper Garhwal. Sulphur and mercury are to be met with at Kedar Nath Mountains, while mica or *abrak* is also obtainable in the Dudatoli range. Limestone is to be had everywhere.

## CHAPTER V.

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### PEOPLE, CASTE, RELIGION, AND CUSTOMS.

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The present population of the country consists of Hindus, Christians, Mahomedans, Chinese and the Tibetans. Men of other nationalities also live in the country in pursuit of trade or other occupations. In describing the ethnology of this land, only the people called the 'Garhwalis' come within the scope of our subject.

With regard to the period when, and the type or race of men by whom, this country was first inhabited, two main theories have been advanced. The first identifies itself with the popular Hindu belief, based either on the literal interpretation of the scriptures or on natural theology, which regards the inhabitants of this country as Aryans of their most primitive stage. The Skanda Purana and others adduce clear evidence in support of this view. It is asserted by these puranas that even Brahma himself meditated at Deva prayag before creating the cosmogony of the world. The second one is the proved and accepted view of modern antiquarians. According to them the Aryans came to inhabit this country by immigration. The scriptural view is complex, and no tangible evidence being obtainable in its favour we shall leave it aside and deal only with the second view mentioned above.

According to the modern historians the population of India were divided into two classes, *viz.*, the Aryans and the aborigines, and this division amongst the people still obtains in Garhwal. The settling in the place by the Aryans undoubtedly took place by immigration. Nothing is known regarding the occupation of this country by primitive people, but we may presume safely that at least some portions of this country were not unknown to a certain type of aboriginal ancient Indians before the Aryans came here. We may further presume that the greater portion of this land was impenetrable on account of its thick forests, and chains of mountains infested with wild animals. These very obstacles must have led those wild people to take refuge in this land, when pressed hard by the Aryans and driven out from the rich and fertile river basins of the Punjab. Those primitive people loved to reside in the jungles near brooks and rivulets, where they could procure edible roots and fruits of plants and trees and flesh of wild animals. Where they could procure water from running streams or pools without undergoing the trouble of digging wells and drawing water from them. This custom of dipping into some pool or stream for drinking water is still prevalent among the people of low class in Garhwal. These aborigines had no means of encountering their enemies and as such they had to resort to the caves of the mountains and to the thickness of the forests.

By the time the Aryans spread all over the Punjab, which must have taken several centuries, numerous tribes of the aborigines in larger or smaller groups must have migrated to this country, some of

whom were a little civilised, while the others were quite wild and savage. They had firmly established their footing in this country, and some of them had grown so powerful that when subsequently the Aryans migrated to this part of the country fierce fights took place between the parties. Kolasur, Banasur and Mahishasur and others are narrated in the Skanda Purana and Devi Bhagvat to have been the prominent leaders of them. When the Aryans had occupied suitable tracts in the southern portion of this country which was sparsely vegetated, these aborigines offered least resistance to the hardy Aryan invaders, except at Srinagar where Kolasur, a leader of the Kols, opposed the Aryans with great vigour (Kedar Khanda, page 982). However, the aborigines must have been compelled to betake themselves to the northern portion of Garhwal, where the thick forests and jungles, the high hills, and the deep caves and ravines afforded them shelter.

It seems probable that the Aryans took centuries in spreading over this land; and in the meantime the aborigines made strongholds of many places in Nagpur, Dasoli and Painkhanda. The many forts built on the top of the hills were most probably the outcome of these primitive people's labour.

From the Puranas it appears that in the Epic period these Asuras had numerous encounters with the Aryans. According to traditions Banasur resided in Bamsu (Kaliphat), Worchha Naga in Urgam (Painkhanda), Basuki and Pushkar Nagas in Nagpur, and Takshak Naga in Dasoli. Enumeration of many others will lengthen our subject. We shall, therefore, remain content only with the narration of the combat of Banasur with Sri Krishna, a story

which would go to show that the Aryans married the daughters of the aborigines. Krishna's grandson Aniruddha fell in love with Usha, the daughter of Bana, who saw Aniruddha in a dream and became enamoured of him. She related this to her female confidanté, Chitrlekha, who devised the employment of a portrait-painter to take the portrait of all the young princes in the neighbourhood. On seeing the portrait of Aniruddha Usha at once recognised him. Chitrlekha then clandestinely took the youth to Usha's room at night. After a time he was detected and reported to Bana. A furious fight ensued between Bana and him, but he (Aniruddha) proved invincible. Bana having failed in his attempt to subdue him with arms contrived his capture by means of his magical powers. Aniruddha was freed from his captivity by Sri Krishna who utterly defeated and humbled Bana. Aniruddha's and Usha's images are still worshipped in Ukhimath. In fact it is stated that the place derives its name from Usha or Ukha. Similarly, in various other places in Upper Garhwal such combats between the Aryans and the aborigines no doubt did take place.

After the great Kuru-Panchala war, scarcely any mention of the Asuras are to be found. We presume, that the more civilised of them got mixed up with the Aryans. For instance the Nags, Dravidians and Kols were classed as Khasiyas, while others were admitted as Sudras to carry on menial occupations, and to serve them as serfs or bondsmen. Even to the present day, we find that about one-third of the whole population of Garhwal is constituted of this class of inhabitants and they are so useful that

most of the necessary menial work is carried out by them. They are classed according to their avocations, *e. g.*, blacksmith, carpenter, minstrel, weaver, shoe-maker, etc.

The customs and manners of these low class Khasiyas differed in every respect, till recently, from those of the Aryans. But now they are gradually submitting to the galling yoke of the Brahminical bondage. Excepting the primitive Dravidians, *i.e.*, Doms, who still represent the manners and customs of an age prior to all records, if we compare them with the ancient tribes inhabiting the forests of the Vindhya Mountains, the Nilgiri Hills and the Sonthal Parganas, we find them altogether changed owing to their colonising with the Aryans in the villages, though in abodes quite apart from them. They are hereditarily unclean; their touch is defilement; their very shadow casts pollution over the object on which it falls, and their foot dare not tread upon the earth of a Hindu's house.

It seems probable that Siva had been the deity of the ancient aborigines of the country. Many of the civilised Asuras, like Ravana, performed rigid austerities at Tung Nath and offered costly sacrifices to propitiate Siva to bestow upon them power and wealth, so that they might be able to conquer and baffle the Aryans. The Puranas prove our assertion. Further, it is essential to note in this connection that the word "Sivaman" (now used in a corrupted form), which is the meeting salutation even at the present day among all classes of men in this country, is uttered by the Doms in a peculiar style, *i.e.*, "Thakur Sivaman," meaning "Sir! recognise Siva." It is, therefore, apparent that the word Siva is an aboriginal



one and originated from this land, the "Abode of Siva." It is addressed in a potential way by these aborigines entreating the Aryans to adopt or recognise their god. When most of the people must have submitted to the political yoke of the Aryans, the Brahmins and other Aryans appear to have adopted, as a matter of courtesy or civility, the word "Siva" for the Vedic Rudra.

As to the tribes or the types of aborigines inhabiting this country during the Epic period, the Puranas show that they were mostly Kols and the Kiratas (Kedar Khand, Chap. 206, verses 2 and 3). The Mahabharata, in addition to the above-named tribes mentions the Tangana tribe also as inhabiting this country. We do not find mention of the Dravidians anywhere who, most probably being more civilised and powerful than their brethren, were designated as Asuras, Kinnaras and Gandharvas. There is a hymn in the Rig Veda in which the name "Dasyu" has been given to the non-Aryan tribes, but later on they were given some distinctive names. In the Himalayas they were called Taksas, Kinnaras, and Gandharvas. (D. N. Paut). The Dravidians were the worshippers of the Shesh Nag and we have still a remnant of these Dravidians mixed with the Aryan blood in this country in the Naga Brahmins, Khasyas, etc.

We again advert to the Aryan immigration into this country. The two great Hindu epic poems throw some light on the subject. From them we know that the men of the solar dynasty had been adventurous enough to explore the northern Gangetic valley, but at last the task successfully fell to the lot of Raja Bhagirath, an ancestor of Ram Chandra, who

thoroughly explored the Gangetic valley up to its very source, and had been the first man to communicate to the other Aryans a detailed account of the people and geography of this land. Although at the present day Bhagirath's discovery of the Ganges is considered nothing but a myth, we do not understand why it should be a fiction when we find his name and traditions prevalent all over India for the last 5,000 years and when a mention of him is made in all the sacred books of the Hindus. So taking Bhagirath's discovery of the Ganges to be a fact, we can discern the probable date of his arriving at this country. According to the pedigree traced in Valmiki's Ramayana, Bhagirath preceded Rama by fifteen generations. Taking 25 years to be the average period of the reign of each of them, Bhagirath ruled 400 years before Rama. Now according to the latest researches Sree Rama Chandra flourished in 3500 B. C. (which is the end of the Vedic period). Thus we infer that this country was explored by the Aryans as early as 3000 B. C. Our readers will further bear in mind that the Rig Veda, which is the earliest memoir of that race, discloses a reference in regard to them in its earliest hymns showing their place of habitation between the north of the Khyber Pass and the banks of the Jumna and the Ganges. From this we conclude that the Aryans in a body had not entered this country till the end of the Rig Vedic period. Only small parties, in pursuit of spiritual meditation, had been frequenting the place ever since its exploration. The actual rush of the Aryans to this country seems to have taken place in the beginning of the Brahminical period, for most of the "Brahmans" were composed by their authors in this land (Kedar

Khand). Our inference, therefore, leads us to this period as being the time when the Aryans settled in this fertile and healthy country.

During the epic period modern Garhwal formed the principal portion of the Northern Panchaladesha as will be evident from Mahabharata, Sava Parva, Sec. 34. There it is related that King Drupada, the King of the Panchalas, divided his kingdom (for reasons which we need not mention here) into two parts, northern and southern. The former comprised the tract of land beyond the Ganges, while the latter lay between the Ganges and the Jamna. The Northern Panchala was ceded to Dronacharyya, the illustrious preceptor of the Kurus and the Pandavas. Its capital was Ahichhatra and its territory extended down to the Chambal. The victorious Drona naturally must have selected for him the more populous and flourishing portion of the Panchala Kingdom, and from this time onward, the Northern Panchala came under the sway of the Kurus. We further know that Panchala at this period was a most prosperous kingdom. It possessed many a spacious town with gilded spires and shining domes. It had many an ally and powerful vassal potentates. Panchala supplied seven Akshauhinis of warriors in the Kurukshetra war. These warriors were mostly Brahmins and Kshatriyas. This is an important piece of evidence proving that Garhwal and Kumaun at that period were well populated and a flourishing countries. It was thronged with Aryan peoples of high castes and culture side by side with the stagnant non-Aryans of various denominations, *e. g.*, Kiratas, Chinas and others. Panchala had been divided long before the Kurukshetra war

and the northern portion annexed to the Kuru Kingdom, for Bhagdatta, a minor ruler under Dhritarashtra, the Kuru King, led a huge army consisting mostly of Kiratas and Chinas under his command for the support of the Kurus in the great war (Udyoga Parva, Chap. 19).

Besides the above-mentioned non-Aryan clans, we find mention of another clan in the list of Pandava Tirthayatra. Narad Muni and Dhaumya described these people in Van Parva, Mahabharata, onward from Chap. 80, as Tanganas. This tribe, along with the Paritanganas, appears to have inhabited the northern slope of the Himalayas. We cannot exactly say whether they were aborigines or they belonged to the Aryan stock. A long list of the non-Aryan tribes living in the north is given in Chap. 9 of the Bhishma Parva ; some of them, *viz.*, the Yavanas, Hunas, Chinas and the Yammunas appear to have been living in North Panchala, *i.e.*, Garhwal.

It has been shown before that the Panchalas and the Kurus, both Aryan tribes, ruled over this land. It is, therefore, only natural to think that their successive generations must have sought, up to the present day, an enduring home in Garhwal. This assertion is supported by the fact that some of the high classes of Hindus in this country suppose themselves to be the lineal descendants of the Kuru-Panchala Aryans of yore. The memorable genealogy of Pandavas and Kurus is preserved up to the present day and the performance of Pandava Leela (the event of the Kuru-Panchala war), which took place about 1400 B. C., is played in commemoration thereof. The five Pandavas are up to this day held in the same

high reverence as Sree Rama Chandra is considered in Oudh, both by the literate and the illiterate classes living in these regions. The reason is that they were born in Pandukeshwar near Badri Nath (Maha-bharata, Sambhava Parva, Sec. 119). Draupadi, that graceful lady, the daughter of Yajnasena, rose from the sacrificial fire in this land. She as also the five Pandavas were thus born and reared up in their childhood in these regions. Reciprocally, the Pandavas also showed the utmost devotion and veneration to the land of their birth. During the thirteen years of their exile, the greater portion of their banishment was spent in this country, for their wanderings are still identified with some rocks or streams connected with some of their exploits or anecdotes of their travels. Again in their old age, after placing Parikshit on the throne, they retired to Kedar Nath and thence to Kailash to end their worldly life. (This great journey of the Pandavas has been beautifully rendered into English by Sir Edwin Arnold). It is, therefore, evident that there was no other influence but the tie of connection which could move the inhabitants of this country from the remotest period to revere the Pandavas.

It is further to be noted that immigration into this country continued even after the sacred shrines of the Badri Nath and Kedar Nath had been erected, as some of the families glory in tradition that their ancestors who came here for pilgrimage, were attracted to settle here by the beauty of the surroundings. Thus, the people of this country must, of necessity, be of a variety of stocks comprising Dakhanis, Punjabis, Madhydeshis, etc., along with the settled Aryans

and the primitives. And in a country thus populated by diverse sections of the Aryans hailing from different parts of India and environed by a combination of circumstances such as isolation and want of free intercourse with the Aryans of the plains, it was only natural that separate language, social customs and religion, based on divergent views should automatically develop. However, we shall deal with this point in its proper place.

Some of the principal ancient aboriginal tribes have altogether become extinct, *e.g.*, Kiratas, Tanganas and the Asuras. They formed at one time the bulk of the population. They are no more traceable now. The inhabitants occupying Jawnsar at the present day and the Bhoteas living in the extreme north of Garhwal may be the representatives of Yamnunas and Huras, respectively, of the Epic period.

Thus we see that the present inhabitants of Garhwal are the remnants of a variety of the Aryan stock and primitive people, whom we shall now examine philologically and physiologically. They may be divided into two main classes, *viz.*, (a) the "Bashisht" or superior; but this word most probably, on account of its not being properly pronounced by rustics, has been corrupted to "Bith" and this corrupted form is used now. This class comprises of course the people of the three higher castes. (b) "Dom" means a low-caste man, (Sudra).

Viewing the inhabitants physiologically a good deal of difference is discernible in people of high, middle and low classes. Sir H. H. Risley in the Census Report of India for 1901 has shown that a large part of the United Provinces is inhabited

by Aryo-Dravidian people having a mixture of Aryan and Dravidian blood in their veins. Garhwal most probably is included in it, and we endorse Sir Herbert Risley's statement on the authority of two legends of the Mahabharata as evidence of the ethnology of the Garhwal people, that they are mostly Aryo-Dravidian. The legends are, (a) the marriage of Usha and Aniruddha cited elsewhere ; (b) the dialogue which took place between Nahusha and Yudhishthira, in which the latter in reply to a question put by the former says that there is a great intermixture of races going on.

Some people such as Pabilas, and Boras living in the lower country, and a great portion of Khasyas in Dasoli, Painkhanda, Badhan and other parganas, are living examples of the Aryo-Dravidian race on account of their characteristic features. They distinctly indicate traces of mixed blood. They are darker, sturdier and rougher people ; their language has not the least elegance ; and their social customs show great laxity in every respect. But the higher class of people appear to have been very particular and conservative in keeping their blood as pure as possible.

History points out, that the derivation of the word caste primarily originated in the sense of distinction of race indicated by the difference of colour. The Aryan immigrants from the North were fair, while the primitive people of India were black and thus the ethnic caste seems to have been established at the close of the Rigvedic period.

At the same time the Aryans who could treasure up the hymns of the Veda in memory and officiated

as priests, came to develop among them a gradual differentiation of two different castes—Brahmana and Rajanya. However, during the Rigvedic period Professor Weber says : “ there are no castes as yet, the people are still one united whole, and bear but one name that of Visas.” (*Ind. Lit. P. 38.*)

But during the Brahmanical period caste system established itself with a full sway and the word “ caste ” became identical with “ *gotra* ” which meant lineage. Each *gotra* was made up of several families (*kula*) and the members of a family were the individual units.

There were twenty-four Rishis who were the progenitors of *gotra*, to which the various classes of the upper three castes belong. The Sanscrit equivalent for a community is “ *jati*.” Each clan or family was guided by its own “ *jati dharma* ” or its code of social laws, and each *jati* had to preserve the clan intact from alien influences and to keep the Aryan blood as pure as possible by restricting marriage and partaking of food to one’s own community. The descendants of different *gotras*, however, enjoyed the privilege of intermarriage and free social intercourse; only of the community to which they belonged.

On these principles the Hindus were divided into four castes, namely, Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaisya, and Sudra. To each caste was assigned its own special sphere of activity by the Hindu Shastras and any transgression therefrom constituted sacrilege leading to consequent loss of caste. As everywhere else in India, the Hindu population of Garhwal also consists of these four castes. And other influences have given rise to numerous sub-castes.



We may first of all deal with the Brahmanas. An immigration of Brahmanas from Gour, Maharastra, Dravira, Kanyakubja, and other countries into Garhwal took place either during or after the Brahmanical age and continued till the Sankarite period or even after.

In Garhwal, Brahmanas have two principal orders, *viz.*, Sairola and Gangari. These divisions evidently sprang up from the time when Raja Kanakpal established his capital at Chandpur in upper Garhwal. The local tradition represents the original constitution of the two main groups thus:—the Brahmanas of village Nouti came with the Raja as *purohitas* and cooks to the royal household. These circumstances rendered them to be honoured with a distinctive appellation of Sairola. The Brahmanas of Gairola, Thapli and Ratura, which were situated in close proximity to the capital at Chandpur, and who also are said to have come up as courtiers with the Raja subsequently identified themselves with the *purohitas*. In course of time, either owing to demand of service, or matrimonial alliance, the four parent villages added more Brahmanas into the fold of the Sairola group and thus a distinct community, quite separate from other Brahmanas, sprang up. Though numerically inferior to the other groups, the influence they possessed in the royal household was very great and they monopolised many offices in the administrative branch of the State, especially when the capital was at Chandpur.

There is, however, nothing to shew that the Sairolas as yet established an exclusive superiority of caste over the Gangari group. Later on about 1400 A.D. Raja Ajaipal, the founder of the capital at

Srinagar, enjoined his standing army, of whatever caste and creed its composition might be, to take food only if it had been prepared by a Sairola Brahmana and the whole colony of Garhwal submitted to the royal will. This opportunity gave the Sairolas a permanent caste superiority which they have not lost since.

The attention of this class of Brahmanas, was all but engrossed in temporal objects, persistence in which, time has not been able to slacken. The sub-castes of this community have been shown on page 85.

Now we come to the Gangari group of Brahmanas. Strictly speaking, Gangari means, "an inhabitant of a low-lying warmer valley" and originally this epithet might have been an apt one, for, most of the villages of the Sairolas were then situated in the higher locality of Chandpur, but at the present day when they are scattered all over the district the term seems to be a misnomer. This group comprises the bulk of the Brahmanas of Garhwal. Some of its clans have, from a remote period, detached from its main body and formed a circle of their own under the style of "Nirola" which means disjoined. Brahmanas of this sub-group are mostly sprinkled all over Parganah Nagpur; they restrict wedlock and eating to their own cluster. A list of the sub-castes of this subdivision is appended on page. 87.

Mingled with both of these groups are masses of various clans of Brahmanas from the plains and other hills denominated by the names of the villages they occupied, for instance, Naithanis from Naithana, Bughanas from Bughani. Among the Gangaris, four

communities, viz., Bughanas, Dobhals, Unials, and Dungwals enjoyed various privileges during the regime of the Garhwal Rajas, when their capital was at Srinagar. It is said that from the nature and importance of their official functions they occupied better social rank.

The Bughanas, Kimothis, and the Maikotas have also been remarkable for their pretensions of the knowledge of all the branches of Brahmanical lore. The Brahmanas in Garhwal evince a taste for astrology, although at the present day the majority of Brahmanas in Garhwal have abandoned the researches of religious knowledge, and are mostly inclined towards agriculture and service. However, compared with other parts of India, Garhwal can still boast of a very large number of Sashtiris, Jotyshis, Tantric, Mantra and Yantra practitioners. Very few Brahmanas have been observed to devote a greater portion of their time in a laborious routine of religious observances.

Turning one's thought to bye-gone ages, what a picture Garhwal presents to the mind's eye, that at one time it ranked as the first seat of Vedic learning. From distant countries students have flocked and stooped their heads to the country for its being a seat of Vedic and Philosophical learning, but to-day there is scarcely found a Brahmana or Kshatriya who even keeps a copy of the Vedas or Philosophy in his house. The highest form of the literature of a Brahmana will be that of Puranas Tantaras and later literature.

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I.—*List of Sairolas.*

|     | Sub-castes of the Sairolas. | Caste-division of the plains. | REMARKS.   |
|-----|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|--|
| 1.  | Nautiyal ...                | Gaur ...                      | Derive their name from Nauti village in Chandpur.  |
| 2.  | Raturi ...                  | " ...                         | Derive their name from Ratura village in Chandpur.   |
| 3.  | Khanduri ...                | " ...                         | Derive their name from Khandura, village in Chandpur. They have been for many years diwans and now hold four hereditary qanungoships in Garhwal. |
| 4.  | Thapliāl ...                | " ...                         | Derive their name from Thapli, village in Chandpur.  |
| 5.  | Semwal ...                  | " ...                         | Semli, do.   |
| 6.  | Chamola ...                 | " ...                         | Chamoli, do.   |
| 7.  | Gairola ...                 | " ...                         | Gairolī, do.   |
| 8.  | Diuri ...                   | " ...                         |  |
| 9.  | Nawni ...                   | Gaur ...                      |  |
| 10. | Maithani ...                | Gaur ...                      | Derive their name from Maithana.   |
| 11. | Diundi ...                  | Gaur ...                      |  |
| 12. | Semalti ...                 | Gaur ...                      |  |
| 13. | Hatwal ...                  |                               |  |
| 14. | Kotyal ...                  |                               |  |
| 15. | Lakhera ...                 |                               |  |

II.—*List of Gangaris.*

|    | Sub-castes of the Gangaris proper. | Caste-division of the plains. | REMARKS.   |
|----|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|--|
| 1. | Bughana ...                        | Gaur ...                      | These are called Chouthoki Brahmans and they held important positions under the former Government; they consider themselves somewhat superior to the other Gangari Brahmans. |
| 2. | Uniyāl ...                         | Maithil ...                   |  |
| 3. | Dobhal ...                         | Kanyakubja...                 |  |
| 4. | Dangwal ...                        | Dravira ...                   |  |
| 5. | Maithani ...                       | K. Kubja ...                  | They acted formerly as clerks to the Dobhal and Khanduri Diwans of the Raja.   |

## II.—List of Gangaris :—contd.

|     | Sub-castes of the<br>Gangaris proper. |  | Caste-division of<br>the plains. | REMARKS.   |
|-----|---------------------------------------|--|----------------------------------|--|
| 6.  | Saknyani ...                          |  | K. Kubja ...                     | Mr. Atkinson in Himalyan Gazetteer, Vol. III, says that "the name is said to be derived from the great Saka race. Others connect the name with a colony of ascetics who lived near Topoban or Rishikesh, others again assign the name to a great grove of Sakin trees, whose bluish flowers were used in worship and which gave the name of Sakni-yana to that village and Sakni-yani to the peoples." |
| 7.  | Ghildyal ...                          |  | Gaur ...                         | Origin from Tarai.   |
| 8.  | Chandola ...                          |  | Saraswat ...                     | They were also formerly di-<br>wans to Rajas.  |
| 9.  | Dhoundyal ...                         |  | Gaur ...                         |  |
|     | Dabral ...                            |  | Maharashtra ...                  | ...  |
| 10. | Barthwal ...                          |  | Gaur ...                         | ...  |
| 11. | Kukreti ...                           |  | Dravira ...                      | Uperitis of Kumaun.  |
| 12. | Ojha ...                              |  | ...                              | ...  |
| 13. | Joshi ...                             |  | Dravira ...                      | Origin from Kumaun. They inter-marry with the Gangaris and Nirolas only.   |
| 14. | Mamgain ...                           |  | Dravira ...                      |  |
| 15. | Tiwari ...                            |  | ...                              |  |
| 16. | Malasi ...                            |  | Gaur ...                         |  |
| 17. | Kaptwan ...                           |  | Saraswat ...                     |  |
| 18. | Kala ...                              |  | Gaur ...                         |  |
| 19. | Budola ...                            |  | Gaur ...                         |  |
| 20. | Baluddi ...                           |  | Dravira ...                      |  |
| 21. | Dhasmana ...                          |  | ...                              |  |
| 22. | Unial ...                             |  | ...                              |  |
| 23. | Burakoti ...                          |  | Gaur ...                         |  |
| 24. | Badoni ...                            |  | " ...                            |  |
| 25. | Dhaul khandi ...                      |  | " ...                            |  |
| 26. | Khandwari ...                         |  | " ...                            |  |
| 27. | Juyal ...                             |  | " ...                            |  |
| 28. | Bhats ...                             |  | " ...                            |  |
| 29. | Bamroda ...                           |  | " ...                            |  |

## III.—List of Nirolas.

|     | Sub-castes of the Nirolas. | Caste-division of the plains. | REMARKS.  |
|-----|----------------------------|-------------------------------|---|
| 1.  | Kimothi ...                | Gaur ...                      | All inter-marry with each other and derive their caste names from the village they occupy some of them can partake from one vessel the food prepared by any amongst them. |
| 2.  | Maikotā ...                | Dravira ...                   |   |
| 3.  | Binjwal ...                | Kanyakubja ...                |   |
| 4.  | Silwal ...                 | Korantaka ...                 |   |
| 5.  | Kandyal ...                | Kanyakubja ...                |   |
| 6.  | Sem wal ...                | Gaur ...                      |   |
| 7.  | Darmwara ...               | " ...                         |   |
| 8.  | Gugleta ...                | Joshis of Kumaun ...          |   |
| 9.  | Mangwal ...                | Gaur ...                      |   |
| 10. | Khauli ...                 | " ...                         |   |
| 11. | Thalwal ...                | " ...                         |   |
| 12. | Thalasi ...                | Dravira ...                   |   |
| 13. | Dhamkwal ...               | Gaur ...                      |   |
| 14. | Jamlagi ...                | " ...                         |   |
| 15. | Baramwal ...               | " ...                         |   |
| 16. | Garsara ...                | " ...                         |   |
| 17. | Kandari ...                | " ...                         |   |
| 18. | Bamola ...                 | " ...                         |   |
| 19. | Sangwal ...                | " ...                         |   |
| 20. | Purohits ...               | Saraswat ...                  |   |
| 21. | Phalata ...                | Saraswat ...                  |   |
| 22. | Poldi ...                  | Gaur ...                      |   |
| 23. | Dyalkhi ...                | K. Kubja ...                  |   |
| 24. | Missers ...                | Gaur ...                      |   |
|     |                            |                               | They used to inter-marry in the plains but now they inter-marry with Nirolas.   |

We may now sketch briefly the Kshatriyas, the warrior caste. Modern historians point out that these people have been merged into the literary and mercantile classes of people from the period the Maurya dynasty had been in power in India and that only the Rajput branch of it remains pure. To know these Rajputs, we cite an extract from Mr. Dutt's "Ancient Civilization in India." "That the Rajputs were scarcely reckoned among the Aryan Hindus before the eighth century A. D., we find no mention of their names in the literature of the country, or in the records of the foreign travellers, and no trace of their previous culture. Conjectures have been made as to their origin. Doctor H. H. Wilson has held that they were the descendants of the Sakas and other invaders who swarmed into India for centuries before the time of Vikramaditya and that they were defeated by that king ; but nevertheless they spread and settled down in India, especially in eastern and western India. Dark hints are thrown out in the Puranas to indicate that the Rajputs were newcomers, thus the primitive Parihara, Pramara, Chalukya, and Chouhan races are fabled to have sprung from four warriors conjured into existence by the Sage Vasista from a sacrificial fire he had kindled on Mount Abu and thirty six Rajput tribes are said to have been derived from these four primitive races." Such is the history of the Rajputs who form the bulk of the Kshatriya population in Garhwal. The Kshatriya caste in this country is like a huge banyan tree stretching its wide-spreading branches over hundreds of castes and sub-castes and covering with its innumerable leaves the high as well as low classes of Rajputs,

Garhwal is situated in an out of the way corner of the Indian continent, in a locality not much suited to the production of plenty of food-stuffs, which forms one of the most important factors in the history of the human race ; for scarcity of food is the chief motive of the migration of peoples to a fertile locality ; but notwithstanding of such a drawback, it has been a centre of gravity, attracting towards it peoples of all creed and caste belonging to a wider area of Indian population. At a glance into the sub-castes of Brahmanas, the reader will see that they represent all parts of India and the same is the case with the Kshatriyas. The Hindu community from time to time had undergone a peculiar intermixture of different castes, identically differing much from any other tribe or race of antiquity ; each ingredient naturally exalts its superiority over others and these fictions seem to have contributed largely to the development of an infinity of local castes. Moreover, from the beginning of the Christian Era and until about 1400 A. D., Garhwal seems to have been split up into a large number of small sub-divisions ; numerous groups of a few villages had petty chiefs of their own, who owed allegiance to Putti chiefs and the latter were subject to Purganah chiefs or Thakur. Each holder of such an agency styled himself after the name of his village or holding, and thus with the change of time their caste also changed and others followed their example. Even after the establishment of the Kanakpal dynasty in Garhwal, this process of division of castes continued unabated. The Raj-officials, at the same time tried to the best of their ability to convert their job into a caste. Bhandari, \* Negi, † Chowdri ‡ and

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\* Steward. † perquisite. ‡ Mate of coolies.



Kamin are notable examples of the formation of a caste in the manner described above. The Kanakpal dynasty on the other hand followed a quite conciliatory policy not to interfere with such matters, its chief aim being to consolidate the kingdom by divesting petty chiefs of their powers.

Moreover, during the period which we are speaking of, the country was mostly populated by a tribe called Khasyas. An old legend also relates "Kedare Khas Mandle" which means Garhwal is a country of Khasyas. The Katyuris were their ruling family and to know them the reader is referred to Mr. Oakley's "Holy Himalaya". "Katyuris were for many centuries, rulers of Garhwal. Their earlier capital, he says, was at Joshimuth." Most of the petty chiefs probably belonged to this tribe. The title of Rawat signifies an official or surdar. Some of them claim their origin from Katyuri family. From the list on pages 95, 96, and 98, the reader will see that Rawat is the dominant caste of Garhwal and is freely sprinkled all over the country, still holding villages as *hissedari* and some of them forming matrimonial alliances with the higher castes. The next prevailing caste in Garhwal is *Bist*, the more correct word being "Bashist," i.e., good. Their real origin can not be traced, except that of the Parihar Bist, who claim to have immigrated from Kumaun. There are Bists in State Garhwal, who possess still a good deal of authority over the Rawain community. Their physical and social aspects indicate their origin from some other dynasty like the Katyuris. The Bartwals and the Aswals, are said to have come with Raja Kanakpal as his courtiers. The former claim to be Pramars of Malwa.

Deccan and the latter Chouhans of Delhi. Both clans, even at the present day, are held high in the standard of social standing. The Kunwars of Chandpur, the Jhinkwans and the Rowtelas of Nagpur and State Garhwal have now become standing castes ; although these epithets merely denote that they were nothing else than some relations of the royal families. It cannot be said for certain, whether they were detached from Katyuri dynasty or have some other source of their origin. The Malnas, Mushnis, Jagyes and the Meors style themselves as "Negi" and all trace their origin to Naga Vansh. The Early Aryans were in no sense serpent worshippers. But we have elsewhere stated that there was a primitive race in India called Nagas who once found access to the Himalayas, though that tribe is now extinct. There are, however, other tribes called the Nagas in Naga Hills in Assam, who exhibit the typical features of the aborigines and who it is said do not patronise serpent worship. But the Garhwal Nag Vanshis are said to do so. "Professor M. Wilson describes that the Nagas sprang from Kadru, wife of Kasyapa, and some of the females among them (Nag Kanyas) are even said to have married human heroes ; in this way, Ulupi became the wife of Arjuna, and curiously enough, a tribe of the Rajputs, still now existing, claims descent from the Nagas." It then shows that these Nag Vanshis have grown out of the Rajput stock and their features and complexion also indicate them to be of Aryan origin.

There is another clan of the Rajputs found in Dasoli Garhwal who call themselves Chandra Vanshi and ascribe their immigration from Doti. Mr. Oakley

tells us that Raja Som Chand (Chandra vans) came up to Kumaun from Jhusi, near Allahabad, and settled in Champawat, which was a State subordinate to Doti. The Farswans possibly might have been courtiers to Som Chand, but for some reason or other got detached from him and made their residence in Garhwal.

Now we revert to the Khasyas, who have been prominent figures in the scenes of the caste drama of Garhwal. The census records of 1878 A. D. shew 58,000, of Khasyas in this district, this reference contributes nothing towards establishing a link with the Kshatriyas. But within the short period of 38 years, passed since then, they have elevated themselves to the par of the other Rajputs by firm bearing towards their progress. At the present day one shrinks to address any member of their community by their former epithet, and they now pass for Rajputs. The origin and the history of the Khasyas is as obscure and interesting as that of the real Rajputs. The great legislator Manu says that the Khasyas were Kshatriyas before, but they gradually sunk to the level of the Sudras, through their omission of performing several rites and for not consulting the Brahmanas. The Mahabharata Adiparva section 227, on the other hand describes their origin as follows :—

Once upon a time Viswamitra repaired to the hermitage of Vasista Muni, who had a "cow of plenty" (Kamdhenu) and the Rishi used to get instantly whatever he wished to have, on his asking the same of her. Viswamitra, his courtiers and troops were exceedingly gratified with the various delicious foods

they were served with and which were received from the said cow.

Viswamitra addressed Vasista Muni thus :—“ O Great Muni, you take my Kingdom, and enjoy the same after giving me your Nandini” which was the name of the cow. Vasista replied that the cow was reserved for the *gods, guests, pitris* and *yagnas* and so he could not give her unto him. Viswamitra got the cow loose, and made her run about by striking her with a lash and was about to take her away, when she began to shower red hot pieces of charcoal from her tail, creating the Pahlavas from her tail, the Draviras and Sakas from her udder. The Kanchis, were born from her dung, the Sēbaras, the Purandras, Kiratas, Yavanas, Singalas, Barbaras, Khasas, Chinas and Mlechchas sprang up from her sides. Those Mlechchas drove away Viswamitra and his troops. This amazing affair of spiritual power is said to have later on made Viswamitra abandon his Raj and betake himself to the forest to become a Brahma Rishi.

In another place in the same Epic we find a different legend of the origin of the Mlechchas, which seems to be rather rational, *viz.*, that from Yadu were born the Yadavas, from Tirvasu the Yavanas, while the sons of Drihyu were the Bhojas, and those of Anu were the Mlechchas. However that be, most of the Hindu conjectures have started from solid bases, but the Mlechcha legend does not bear much weight owing to the different statements made in the same Epic. Here we may observe that no other tribe in the history of Garhwal is more worthy of investigation than the Khasyas. When and whence did they come to Garhwal Himalaya? To know

this we again refer to Mr. Oakley's "Holy Himalaya" who describes them thus:—

"The Khasyas of Kamaun can be identified with the Khasas, a warlike tribe of Aryan or Scythian blood, who seem to have been at one time widely spread beyond the region of North-Western India and to have become broken up by invasions and conquests during the last two thousand years, so that, some of their descendants are now Musalmans in the far North-West, while others have become Buddhists in Nepal or Assam, and the Khasyas of Kumaun have forgotten their origin and adapted themselves to their Hindu neighbours and settlers, and they are now an ordinary Indian community, sufficiently orthodox for being recognised unmistakably as Hindus. It is interesting to know that the ruling chiefs in Kumaun for several generations were called the Katyuris, and the people Khasas, while in the far-off Kabul for a long period the name of Katura or Kator was given to the reigning family, ruling over an Indian race named Kho or Khosa. They are still the oldest inhabitants of Chitral and other districts such as Kashgar, Kashmir, Hindu Kush and the origin of Khasas is referred to the same source."

The Khasyas of Kumaun and Garhwal have now nearly ascended to the topmost rung of the ladder of the Kshatriyas after two thousand years or more, by a very slow but steady progress. In this hard struggle they have been guided by favourable chances offered to them by the British Raj and western education. The majority of these people now have obtained the privilege of wearing the sacred thread from the Brahmanas who had expelled them from the pale of the Kshatriyas.

It is a hopeful sign of the age, and an indication of the fact, that the Garhwalis have been stirred up by the western education and civilisation. Times change, and with the flights of time human nature begins to change also. At the present day hundreds of subdivisions of caste have been swelled up by the inclusion of the Khasyas, some of whose castes have been shown on page 100.

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*List of the principal Rajputs.*

| Principal castes  | Caste Division of the plains. | REMARKS.   |
|-------------------|-------------------------------|--|
| 1. Bartwal ...    | Panwar or Pramaras.           | Said to have come from Dharanagar along with Raja Kanakpal.  |
| 2. Aswal ...      | Chohan ...                    | Joined Raja Kanakpal from Delhi.   |
| 3. Jhinkwan ...   | Chohan ...                    | Emigrated from Oojain.   |
| 4. Koonwar ...    | Panwar ...                    | Claim to be descended from a petty chief who ruled over some parts of Garhwal before the arrival of Raja Kanakpal. |
| 5. Bootola Raot   | Tuar ...                      | Came from Delhi.   |
| 6. Pharswan ...   | Chandra Vanshi                | Claim to be descended from a raja and emigrated first to Doti Nepal and thence to Garhwal.                         |
| 7. Kandari Gusain | Panwar ...                    | Came from Delhi; claim to be descended from Raja Janmejaya.  |
| 8. Rowtela ...    | Panwar ...                    | Some trace their origin from Dharanagar while others from Kumaun.  |
| 9. Rowthan ...    | Tuar ...                      | ...  |
| 10. Bangari Raot  | ...                           | Emigrated from Kumaun and claim to be the descendants of the Katyuri rajas of Kumaun.                              |
| 11. Ringwara Raot | ...                           |  |

*List of the principal Rajputs.—contd.*

| Principal castes    | Caste Division<br>of the plains. | REMARKS.   |
|---------------------|----------------------------------|--|
| 12. Gorla Raot ...  | Panwar ...                       |  |
| 13. Silala Raot ... | ...                              |  |
| 14. Makrola Raot    | Chohari ...                      | Emigrated from Mainpuri.   |
| 15. Kala Bhandari   | Panwar ...                       | Claim to be Panwars of Delhi and to have emigrated first to Kali Kumaun and thence to Garhwal where they acted as treasurers to the rajas. |
| 16. Sajwan ...      | Surya Vanshi                     | Emigrated from Jullundhar.   |
| 17. Chamola Bisht   | Panwar ...                       | Came from Oojain.  |
| 18. Padyar Bisht    | Parihar ...                      | Emigrated to Garhwal from Kumaun.  |
| 19. Idwal Bisht ... | Parihar ...                      |  |
| 20. Kapola Bisht    | Tuar ...                         |  |
| 21. Chohan ...      | Chohan ...                       | Emigrated from Mainpuri.   |
| 22. Meor Negi ...   | Nag Vanshi ...                   | Claim to have come from Mewar.   |
| 23. Jage Negi ...   | Nag Vanshi ...                   | Claim to have come from Kashmir.   |
| 24. Manrwal ...     | ...                              | Claim to be descended from the Katyuri dynasty of Kumaun.  |



*List of principal Rajputs.—contd.*

| Principal castes      | Caste Division of the plains. | REMARKS.   |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------|--|
| 25. Musni Negi ...    | Nag Vanshi ...                | Came from the Punjab.  |
| 26. Malnas Negi ..    | Nag Vanshi...                 | Came from Jammu.   |
| 27. Khoonti Negi      | Surya Vanshi                  | Said to have emigrated from Nagarkot in the Punjab. They claim to have had possession of $\frac{1}{4}$ part of the district in ancient times and hence the epithet Khoonti i.e. $\frac{1}{4}$ part is given to them. |
| 28. Panwar ...        | Panwar ...                    | Claim to have come from Deccan and some from the Punjab.   |
| 29. Sipahce Negi ...  | Surya Vanshi                  |  |
| 30. Sontyal „ ...     | Tuar ...                      | Emigrated from Delhi.  |
| 31. Khati Gussain ... | Tuar ...                      | Came from Agra.  |
| 32. Ghurdura ...      | Panwar ...                    | Said to have come from Delhi.  |
| 33. Bhoolani Bisht    | Do ...                        | Came from Kumaun.  |
| 34. Iriya Negi ...    | Tuar ...                      |  |
| 35. Pundir „ ...      | Surya Vanshi                  |  |
| 36. Rana of Bhilang   |                               |  |
| 37. Kanuni Bisht *    | Tuar ...                      | From the Punjab.   |
| 38. Mahta ...         | Tuar ...                      | From Saharanpur.   |

\* Most probably the correct word is Katiyuri.

*List of principal Rajputs.—contd.*

| Principal castes    | Caste Division<br>of the plains. | REMARK.  |
|---------------------|----------------------------------|--|
| 39. Miyau ...       | Tuar ...                         | Emigrated from Suket<br>in the Punjab.                               |
| 40. Dangwal Raot    | Surya Vanshi }                   | Claim to have descended<br>from the Katiyuri dy-<br>nasty of Kumaun. |
| 41. Toolsara ...    | Chauhan ... }                    |  |
| 42. Kharkola Negi   |                                  |  |
| 43. Chintola Rajput |                                  | Emigrated from Chan-<br>tetagerh Kumaun.                             |
| 44. Kathait ...     | Nag Vanshi                       | Recent settlers, said to<br>have come from the Pun-<br>jab.          |
| 45. Khatri ...      |                                  |  |
| 46. Pyal Thakur ... | Raghu Vanshi                     | Said to have come from<br>Delhi.                                     |
| 47. Tarhyal Thakur  | Panwar                           | Said to have come from<br>Delhi.                                     |
| 48. Mowdarha Raot   |                                  | Claim to have descended<br>from rajas of Kumaun.                     |
| 49. Chand ...       |                                  |  |

There are many other castes of Rajputs such as Narwani Raot, Manyari Raot, and Baglana Negi, etc., too numerous to mention.

*The inferior class consists of the Khus Rajputs and are known by the following names, viz. : —*

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|                 |                       |
|-----------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Kanyori.     | 29. Metker.           |
| 2. Koomal.      | 30. Myal.             |
| 3. Sankrya.     | 31. Silwal.           |
| 4. Ristwal.     | 32. Malyal.           |
| 5. Gwarhi.      | 33. Karangi.          |
| 6. Chamkotya.   | 34. Soonai.           |
| 7. Bidwal.      | 35. Danoo.            |
| 8. Malooni.     | 36. Patwal.           |
| 9. Digola.      | 37. Bagarwal.         |
| 10. Koonite.    | 38. Ramola.           |
| 11. Rowlyal.    | 39. Danas or Danavas. |
| 12. Khetwal.    | 40. Jetha.            |
| 13. Bhilingwal. | 41. Sikwal.           |
| 14. Raikwal.    | 42. Kanasi.           |
| 15. Riwalta.    | 43. Dhamwan.          |
| 16. Karki.      | 44. Sarai.            |
| 17. Sarki.      | 45. Kola.             |
| 18. Dhekwan.    | 46. Sil Bhandari.     |
| 19. Chakar.     | 47. Khandwari.        |
| 20. Bagdwan.    | 48. Mairwal.          |
| 21. Laukwan.    | 49. Jaintwal.         |
| 22. Bora.       | 50. Saryal.           |
| 23. Seti.       |                       |
| 24. Naik.       |                       |
| 25. Dogra.      |                       |
| 26. Airwal.     |                       |
| 27. Jaintwal.   |                       |
| 28. Kansili.    |                       |

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Etc., etc., and several others too numerous to mention in detail.

The various tables of castes described above have been collected from enquiry and their accuracy cannot be vouched.

The professional castes of Garhwal also come into two divisions, *viz.*, *Bith* and *Dom*, the former consisting of Panda, Goldsmith, Barber, Kumhar and Kalal.

The Pandas have two groups, *i.e.*, Devaprayagi and Kedari; the former is not completely differentiated into a distinct caste but is an integral portion of Gangari Brahmanas with this much difference that he takes a Gangari woman but does not give his girl to him. With regard to serving "Kachi rasoi" he observes strict distinction from Garhwali Brahmanas. The latter forms a distinct group, with a calling of Brahmana, and has originated from the United Provinces, and has restricted wedlock to the precincts of his own circle.

Goldsmith of Garhwal has a distinct designation, but by his social position, local usage, scriptural doctrines and intermarriage he forms an integral portion of the Kshatriyas. Some of the clans of this community have not ever had an interposition of any sort between the high caste of Kshatriyas and themselves except that of profession.

Bard, Barber, Kumhar and Kalal hold a distinct caste. Bards (*or, Rae*) wear the sacred thread and they intermarry with their own caste or with Rajputs and Brahmanas of low scale. It is probable that these four castes fall within the range of the Vaishyas.

The following professional castes belong to the Dom group:—

1. Lohar
2. Mistry

... Blacksmith.  
 — Carpenter or mason.

|                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| 3. Koli          | ... Weaver.  |
| 4. Agri          | ... Oar digger.  |
| 5. Badai or Teli | ... Oil-man.   |
| 6. Ouji or Darzi | ... Musician and tailor.                                   |
| 7. Tamta         | ... Brazier.   |
| 8. Ruria         | ... Basket maker.  |
| 9. Chunera       | ... Wooden pot-maker.                                      |
| 10. Dhunia       | ... Gold sand-washer.                                      |
| 11. Dhunar       | ... Rope bridge-maker.                                     |
| 12. Chamar       | ... Shoe-maker.  |
| 13. Dhaki        | } ... All of them make their<br>females dance and<br>sing. |
| 14. Hurkya       |  |
| 15. Badi         |  |

These aborigines seem to have been allotted with their respective professions from the period the professional castes came to be existed in Garhwal and they have been faithfully occupying the social position assigned to them for generations, and come under the heading of sudras.

5. We shall proceed now to consider the mendicants, and they are as follows :—

1. *Brahmachari*.—The people of this group shave their head and face, wear Brahmanical thread, and preserve a tuft of hair. They believe in the Vedas and Puranas and offer their body to the fire after death. Very few of this sect are found in Garhwal.

2. *Sanyasin*.—This class of yogis principally owe their origin to Swami Sankaracharya and Dattatreya. There are ten sects of them, and hence they are known as the Dasnamas. A number of them have settled in various villages in Garhwal and are votaries of

**Saivism.** Most of them are family-men and possess landed property. It is a custom with these people not to wear the sacred thread, nor to keep the tuft of hair. They, however, put on rosaries made of the seeds of the rindrax tree. They dress themselves in reddish yellow clothes and most of them besmear their whole body with ashes. They bury their corpses and erect Samadhis\* over them. The easy and mendicant life they live, has set a bad example to Garhwal females, hundreds of whom have betaken themselves to the creed of the sanyasins.

A sanyasi named *Kali Kamliwala Baba* whose disciples reside at Hrishikesh has made Dharamsalas along the pilgrim road for the comfort of the pilgrims and has opened Sadabarts at various chatties † for the Sadhus of any sect. The commodious Dharamsala at Srinagar we owe to him.

3. Next to them come the *Jogis (Naths)*. Gorakhnath was the founder of this sect. They have twelve divisions, some of them pierce their ears and wear ear—rings of glass or wood (Mudra or Kundal). Their religion enjoins celibacy, though most of them in Garhwal enjoy married life and cultivate land. This sect also worships Siva. When any one dies, they bury him like a Sanyasi.

4. We find the *Vaishnavas (Bairagis)* also in this country. They belong to the Ramanuja sect, wear the sacred thread and have tufts of hair. They observe the funeral rites and obsequies and other religious rites of Hindus. They throw their dead body into fire. They believe in Vishnu, Rama and Krishna with their other incarnations and have no faith in

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\* Tomb. † Pilgrim stages.

other gods and goddesses. Their distinguishing marks are to wear a neck-lace of basil round their neck and they make with chalk three marks like *trisol* on their foreheads.

Some of them are residing at Nandaprayag and are very wealthy. In the pilgrimage season they shift up to Badri Nath, and establish Sadabaratas from Nandaprayag to Badri-Narayan for the Vaishnava Sadhus, and provide them with accommodation and food. Most of the Vaishnavas are well versed in the Shashtras.

I doubt if there are any real Sadhus among those dwelling in Garhwal, who devote their lives to spiritual culture in a manner as the Yogis ought to do.

The above description of castes in Garhwal leads us to the following conclusions :—

(a) Caste primarily originated on Ethnic principals, there being then only these two races, *i.e.*, Aryans and the Aborigines.

(b) Aryans subsequently were divided into three professional sub-castes, based on mental and physical activities and in the words of Vasista forgiveness, prowess, and manual labour respectively and to each caste a watertight role of distinctive duties was allotted. Non-Aryans were classed as Sudras.

(c) Later on, in the time of Manu, more castes sprang up amongst Hindus, by the intermixture of Aryan sub-castes and the Sudras among themselves and various smaller castes of a somewhat functional character were formed.

(d) Some of the <sup>\*</sup>Manu Samhita's composite castes are found in Garhwal, such as Khasa, Bard, Barber, Kumhar and Kalal. The last mentioned three are found among the lowest peoples of the three Aryan sub-divisions and most probably they belong to the category of the Vaisyas.

While the Katyuris were the rulers of North-Eastern Garhwal in the commencement of the Christian era, the Khasas of Garhwal formed a strong social group of their own, and had been standing third, like Vaisyas, in the scale of social position. By a variety of influences, such as affluence and inter-marriage some of them came to be merged into higher caste Rajputs. The masses of the tribe too after the lapse of several generations have thus succeeded in gaining a position amongst the Rajputs.

Bards, though adhering to their hereditary function, are suspending like a pendulum without position between Brahmana and Kshatriya and aspire to secure a place in either of the two classes.

(e) Of the other composite castes of Manusmirti some are recognisable among "Doms" who are remnants of the primitive tribe and have been faithfully discharging their functions without a murmur. They have all been lumped together in the servile class of Sudra. They are a very useful class of people. In Garhwal they are treated with due sympathy and even generosity.

(f) There are very few higher caste Hindus in Garhwal who have been strictly following the original functional differentiation of their castes, and it is by no means exceptional to find the members of one and the same caste engaged in the most



divergent occupations. "Nothing is more common, for instance," says Mr. P. N. Bose, in his book on Hindu Civilisation, "than to find Brahmanas, who are supposed to constitute the priestly caste, serving as cooks, guards, etc., to lower caste people. By far the majority of the "priests" are unquestionably cultivators, and various kinds of servants; and it is only a small fraction of them that perform the "priestly" function." Similarly if we weigh modern Kshatriyas in the scriptural balance we find only a few in Garhwal who lay claim to being a Kshatriya by descent and profession. The majority of them are cultivators, who also adopt various occupations to supplement their income derived from agriculture. We imagine that this relaxation in the rules of occupation by the Brahmanas themselves who framed them has set an example, and it is but natural for the mass of the people to follow it, as Krishna said in "Gita" that people follow their leaders. In Garhwal people of each caste and tribe are endeavouring to promote their social status and prosperity by adopting lucrative professions, and it seems to be a healthy sign of the age.

The history of the local castes, we have sketched above, shows that the caste-lifting process appears to have been steadily going on in Garhwal from a remote period. Influence, prosperity, and service to Government seem to have been the foundations upon which the numerous castes from time to time sprung from lower sub-divisions of the Hindu castes. As a matter of fact, everywhere, the position of a person in the ladder of society varies to a very large extent in accordance with his material prosperity, culture and matrimonial alliance. By carefully examining the conditions of the various castes,

we find that the people of Garhwal do not form an exception to this rule, inasmuch as the rigidity of social customs and conventions laid down by the Sashtas, are gradually becoming less and less binding on them. On the whole the Garhwalis have been enjoying the influence of a progressive society of their own, which does not impose severe restrictions to retard their own advancement. In fact, it is British rule, which has mostly taught the peoples to shake off absurd superstitions thus helping them to proceed step by step towards the progress of an enlightened life.

To understand the religion of the Garhwalis, it is necessary for us to describe briefly, the various phases which the Aryan religion has passed through, from the remotest periods of the Aryan advent up to the time of the decline of Buddhism. We shall then be in a position to form our opinion with fairness as to the cult in which the religion of the modern Garhwali falls. Modern writers have divided Hinduism into three principal sections:—Vedism, Brahmanism and modern Hinduism. We shall, however, for our own expedience, consider Buddhism as well along with them.

The Aryans of this period seem to have been gifted with great mental powers and with spiritual intuition. They were, as we have already described in the beginning of this work, worshippers of the visible manifestations of Nature. Indra, Agni, Surya, Varuna, the Maruts, and the Aswinis were their elemental gods. They laboured under the belief that the propitiation of their gods would enable them to achieve whatsoever they needed. The form of the worship was also very simple, the chief ingredients of their

offerings being of rice, ghee, honey and *soma* juice. Each and every individual was his own priest in his own dwelling. The saints and the sages of this period were believed to have attained the fullest realisation of the true spirit of the Vedic religion by faith and insight of faith only.

Some centuries later, the simple Vedic religion began to deteriorate, and the elemental gods were made to be subordinate to Brahmanism. Men were specially appointed for the performance of religious duties. The functions gradually grew in importance with the strengthening of religious traditions, and the office came to be hereditary. In course of time laborious rituals and costly sacrifices were admixed with worship. The lay people were sedulously persuaded by the Brahmanas to gain their desired objects by having expensive ceremonials performed through their agency. The efficacy of sacrifices was glorified to every possible extent and the mass were led to believe that it was only by such means that they could obtain a son, superhuman power, and even the ascension to heaven. Nay, they went so far as to assert that the entire weal of human beings depended upon sacrificial rituals. "This laid a crushing incubus upon the whole Hindu life" so says Mr. Burnett.

On the other hand, men of high thoughts and culture began to cast aside such erroneous ideas of the Brahmanas, and they doubted the efficacy of sacrifices and other rites. They turned their thoughts to many an abstruse question of mystical religious speculations. The conclusion which the various philosophers

came to, was that by knowing Him alone man could be saved from death over again. The Vedantists teach, that the soul is divine and is only confined within a material frame. It is only the attainment of perfection which enables him to break open the confinement and to achieve (*Mukti*) (freedom from death and misery). This bondage can only cease through the mercy of God, and as this mercy is shown only to the pure, purity is the condition of His mercy. The revelation of His Mercy is manifested only to the pure and stainless. Such is the philosophical creed of a vedantist. The Indian peasantry, however, had neither the understanding nor the intellect to appreciate the value of this philosophical cult. They therefore adhered to the ritualistic Brahmanic religion, of which, however, they were getting tired. They were held tightly bound by the fetters of caste, which deprived them of the facilities for securing a higher life in society. From the shackles of caste and costly inefficacious sacrifices, people were now longing to be released.

Just at this critical juncture, a son was born to Suddhodan the Sakhya King of Kapilavastu in Magadha, in 557 B. C. The child was named Siddhartha Gautama (the latter being the family name). Siddhartha Gautama renounced his kingdom, wealth, parents, wife and son at the age of 28 years and became a mendicant with the object of studying philosophy and attaining everlasting bliss. The Brahmana *gurus* taught him that penance was the only way to achieve salvation. Gautama faithfully followed their precepts, and went to a forest named Uruvilva in Gaya, where five other ascetics were practising austere

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self-discipline. He admired their earnestness and joined their company. Sakhya Muni Gautama began to live a rigorous ascetic life and continued it for six years, suppressing nature with a view to crossing "the ocean of birth and death, and to arrive at the shore of salvation." But during this tiresome period, he failed to find the true wisdom, and being dissatisfied and disheartened he gave up the path of life he had been pursuing. He sat under the shade of a Bodhi tree on the banks of the Falgu and started on his quest again. After a few years' deep meditation he found *dharma* to be the great truth, sacred law and religion. This alone could be said to redeem human being from error, sin and sorrow. Ignorance, he thought, was at the root of all evils. In this way Gautama attained Buddhahood (the Enlightenment) and Nirvana (the extinction of self).

Gautama Buddha's system of religion, was comprised under four headings:— "Sorrow : the cause of sorrow : the removal of sorrow : and the way leading to the removal of sorrow". His teaching promulgate that all existence is full of sorrow ; this sorrow is caused by the craving of the individual for existence, which leads from birth to rebirth ; it can only be removed by the removal of its cause ; this removal may be effected by following the eight-fold path, *viz.*, (a) right understanding ; (b) right resolve ; (c) right speech ; (d) right action ; (e) right living ; (f) right effort ; (g) right mindfulness ; and (h) right meditation.

It will be seen, then, that the 'eight-fold path' of Buddhism is, essentially identical with the "three Jewels" of the Jains, and that both of them differ

from the Upanishads chiefly in substituting a practical rule of life for an abstract "right knowledge," as the means whereby "freedom" may be secured." (*Rapson's Ancient India*).

The other points in which Sakhya Muni differed from Hinduism were :—that he disregarded caste distinctions, he disbelieved in the efficacy of rituals, and that he taught the uselessness of sacrificial ceremonies and even of austerities for the attainment of true knowledge. He ignored the Almighty, as Kapila did. He preached in Pali, the then language of the people. Gautama was an ideal man, his doctrine of charity, equality, and fraternity was irresistibly attractive and people could not resist following him. Such was the religion which the Kshatrya Rishi vouchsafed to the people of India in the sixth century B. C.

Now it will be necessary to trace out, whether Garhwal came under the pale of this religion. For a century or two Buddhism was confined to Magadha, Rajgriha, and Kosala and even in those places it was the religion only of a limited few.

Asoka was the greatest patron of Buddhism, and as such, he has often been compared to Constantine the Great, the royal patron of early Christianity.

Asoka's sovereign sway extended over the whole length and breadth of the continent of India. Garhwal which is situated in the central Himalayan regions must have been under Asoka's reign. The edict placed above the junction of the Tons and the Jamuna proves that this country formed part of his empire.

"Rhys David's Buddhist India", also shows, that Asoka sent five missionaries to the Himalayas to

propagate Buddhism there. As Nepal, Kumaun and Garhwal were the only countries in the Himalayas, which were close to his capital Pataliputra, we think that these were the countries mentioned as the Himalayas. It is therefore, apparent that the seed of Buddhism was sown in Garhwal by Asoka. On the other hand the Hindu Scriptures afford us information, that at that period, Garhwal was a seat of Brahmanical learning. Buddhism therefore though propagated by the missionaries of Asoka continued dormant until the time of Kanishka at about the first century A. D. This king was a zealous Buddhist and his empire extended from Kabul to Agra, *i.e.*, throughout Northern India. He caused Buddhism to spread all over his empire. Moreover Buddhism at this period deviated considerably from its original form, and assumed different aspect in different localities. At this period when Buddhism seemed to have been the prevailing religion among the masses in Garhwal. For, the members of the Buddhist religion by this time completely ignored 'the eightfold path', promulgated by their preceptor for the laity. The monks now adopted their teachings to the traditions of their neighbours comprising the aborigines and Brahmanas as well. It suited to the needs and mental capacities of all classes of people. Buddhism thus came to assume in the form of Saivism, Tantricism, Saktism and Magic. Siva, Bhairava, Mahakala, and Kshetrapala, the gods of the aborigines, doubtless appealed to the imagination of the Buddhist monks, who grafted them as well as other Hindu deities into their religion, and worshipped them in *stupas*, along with the images of Buddha,

Huen Tsang's account also shows that Buddhism and Brahmanism existed side by side, when he visited Garhwal in 634 A. D. But at that period the Buddhism of Sakya Muni was the prevailing religion, though the ideas taught by the Brahmanas were permeating all kinds of social strata. The aboriginal fetich on the one hand was hailed by Buddhist monks, while the Brahmanas tried to the best of their ability to draw them within the pale of Brahmanical communion. These fetiches, however, never succeeded in vitiating the minds of Rishis and holy Sages of the Vedic and Brahmanical period.

It is worth noting, that there is no trace of *stupas*, or *Monasteries* in modern Garhwal except the edicts mentioned before and a trident of *mallas* of Nepal, at Barahat in State Garhwal, and at Gopeshwara and a few Buddhist images at Tungnath, Agastyamuni, Srinagar and Nalla chatti. It seems probable that, in that age there were wooden temples in existence which have since then been effaced by some other religious waves, which must have passed over this land, through the pilgrims from various parts of Hindustan. Buddhism was gradually merging into the Sakta and Tantric cults while Brahmanism was again asserting its own sway. At this juncture a Brahmana [philosopher sprang up in Madras to whom Garhwal and Kumaun owe much. The particulars of the reforms promulgated by him will now be the subject of our notice.

The year 788 A. D. heralded the advent of this great reformer. Sankaracharya came of a poor Brahmana family, in a village called Kaldi in Madras. He lost his father in his childhood, but his mother, who



belonged to the Nambudri family, gave her only son a thorough training in all the branches of the Shastras. It is said, that when he was only sixteen years of age, he became master of all the various schools of philosophy and theology. This wonderful boy, from an early age, resolved to live the life of a *sanyasi*, but his mother objected to his pursuing such a course, on the ground that it would prevent him from performing the obsequies of his parents. He, however, obtained his mother's permission and went to a great *sanyasi* named Gobinda. Chidvilas locates the hermitage of Gobinda Bhagvat Pada, on the Himalayas in Badri Ban, (Garhwal.) Sankara now got himself invested with the robe of a *sanyasi* in Garhwal and went through a course of discipline and instruction which must have taken some years to make him an adept. It is to be remembered that during his novitiate he must have noticed the religious corruptions that had taken root in Garhwal. Soon after the completion of the disciplinary course, he left Badri Ban for Kashi or Benares where he opened his own school of philosophy. Sister Nivedita in the "Web of Indian Life, p. 581," says :— "That the characteristic product of Oriental culture is always a commentary. By this form of literature the future is knot firmly to the past," and so Sankara began with commenting upon the various Upanishads, the Gita and the Vedanta Sutras. It is no doubt remarkable that at an age when others would pass for boys, Sankara wrote a commentary upon the Vedanta Sutras, which is the masterpiece of his numerous productions. Mr. Iyer in the "Life of Sri Sankaracharya" writes :— "Sankara lived sometimes at Benares, and sometimes at Badri, to be free

from bustle and disturbance, composing his works and submitting them to the wise men of his acquaintance in those parts". It seems that Sankara had a special liking for the Badrika Ashram which was then rich in learning. It is stated, that when he had gathered round him a large number of disciples of brilliant intellect, he set out from Kashi on a tour to preach the Vedantic religion. This can be judged from his books which at the same time display a beauty and vigour of style unique even amongst the range of the best Sanskrit classical literature. We however, refrain from entering into the details of his achievements in the south, east and west, as it is beyond the province of our work. We shall confine ourselves only to the description of the changes which he introduced in the religion of the inhabitants of Badri Ban (Garhwal).

Sankaracharya was influenced to a considerable extent by the philosophy of Gautama, but he did not do away the name of God. As to the doctrines of his religion, Professor Wilson correctly observes that: "It was no part of Sankaracharya's object to suppress the acts of outward devotion or the preferential worship of any acknowledged pre-eminent deity. His leading tenet is the recognition of Brahma (Para-Brahma) as the sole and supreme ruler of the Universe and as distinct from Siva, Vishnu or any other individual member of the Hindu Pantheon. With this admission and having regard to the weakness of these human faculties which cannot elevate themselves to the conception of the Inscrutable First Cause, the observance of such rites, and the worship of such deities as are either prescribed by the Vedas or the works not incompatible

with their authority, were left undisturbed by Sankarcharya."

Tradition and other sources inform us that Sankaracharya's first act of reformation in Garhwal was to combat with and refute the cults, in which Buddhism and Hinduism were both then intermixed. He brought back the mass of the people from the pale of abominable customs and fetich worship by enlightening them that the Vedas and Upanishads, never enjoined their observance. At the same time he convinced the Buddhists that they were in error by not following the tenets of the religion taught by Buddha. Sankara replaced Buddhist monasteries and stupas in well populated localities by temples in groups of five and had them dedicated to Siva, Vishnu, Surya, Saraswati and Ganesha, with a view to counteract the tendencies of the peasantry to worship unlawful and unauthorized deities. There is a tradition still current that Sankara took a vow of building five temples daily before breakfast. Assuming this to be a fact, he must have had a large staff of masons and carpenters with him and must have built a number of temples all over the country he passed through. Many of these are dilapidated now, though some are still extant and form a prominent feature in Garhwal, indicating labour, expense and architectural beauty. These show that the dominant influence of his religion upon the minds of Hindus was great. All over India this youthful reformer was regarded as an extraordinary personality. Even at the present day he is venerated as a holy sage and is regarded as an *avatar* of Siva by many. Brahmanism owes him an ever lasting debt, for he it was, who redeemed it from the pale of

Buddhism. He must have been furnished with sufficient funds by kings and people alike to meet such expenses, otherwise for a *sanyasi* like Sankara, it would not have been an easy task to undertake such grand works. The Hindus seem to have inherited the spirit of liberality from ancient times. Many palatial *dharamsalas* and temples in India are the works of Hindu philanthropy. Even now many a pilgrim of poor means is fed by wealthy and charitable Indians, who have established houses for the supply of food to pilgrims going to or returning from various *tirthas*. Another great thing introduced by Sankaracharya was to establish two principal shrines at the foot of the Himalayas in the extreme north of the district and to consecrate them to Vishnu and Siva, each bearing the name of the locality it is situated in. Some modern historians consider both the places to be Buddhist temples, originally dedicated to Buddhist images. Here it will be necessary to remind our readers that Kedar and Badri, even before the establishment of the temples referred to above, were renowned places of consecration. Aryans used to go there for pilgrimage. ( *See the chapter on pilgrimage.* )

There are indications of image-worship among the Hindus long before the time of Gautama Buddha. The building of Kedar Nath temple is attributed to the Pandavas and it seems to be possessed of great antiquity. It will thus be seen that sectarian system of various forms existed from a remote period. They preceded even the age of Buddhism and continued till they were reduced only to five systems by Sankara Charya. Sankara also founded permanent monasteries at Joshimuth and Ukhimuth, most probably after

the pattern of Sringeri *Mutt* in Madras, and other *mutts* in the east and west.

Concerning the establishments of Sankrite *mutts*, Professor M. Williams says:—"These establishments had a complete ecclesiastical organization and a regular provision for self-perpetuation, so that the spiritual powers of the first head of the community were transmitted by a kind of apostolical succession through a line of succeeding heads, regularly elected." Moreover, Sankara must have foreseen that his *sanyasis* would spread Vedantic views among the inhabitants of Garhwal, and would thus progress in communing their thoughts with Him.

Let us now turn to Badri Narain. Some writers are of opinion that the temple of Narain at Badri was built in memory of the residence of Sankara at the place in his early days. It might be so, but it is noteworthy that the ministering priests he appointed in the two celebrated Hindu shrines mentioned above were respectively a Nambudri Brahmana and a Lingoit Jangama both of whom were hailed from Madras in Malabar. Several reasons may be assigned for his doing so. In the first place, his mother, as we have already described, belonged to the Nambudri caste and in her sacred memory, it is probable that Sankara selected Nambudri Brahmanas as the ministering priests at this celebrated *tirtha*. Mr. K. Aiyar, however, assumes that Sankara belonged to Malabar, and that, his extreme conservative tendencies are to account for the choice of a Brahmana of Malabar as the priest at Badri Narain. A Brahmana from Malabar still continues to be the priest of the above shrine, with some slight departure. Prior to the succession of Narain

Nambudri I, to the priesthood, all priests had to live a life of celibacy, and Sankaracharya's behest to this effect must have been stringent, based on the authority of the Shastras. The shrines referred to above demonstrate Sankara's love for and devotion to this country. They further enable the people of the country to learn that those were the places, where the Rishis of yore passed through all the stages leading to the attainment of higher absolution. The Vedantists of yore like Vyas, Kapila and Vasista and others realized the divine nature of man by their daily association with the various awe inspiring manifestations of Nature which served them like strong pegs to hang their spiritual ideas on and reminded them, that in that region of magnificent forest retreats, the holy sages received the accumulated treasures of spiritual laws, (the vedas, which teach us of the hoary religion of Hindus). Otherwise, there could not be any apparent object in establishing these *tirthas*, by a person, who on all hands is admitted to have been a strict Unitarian in principle.

Let us now turn to the religion of the inhabitants of Gharwal. The upper two classes generally recite the hymns of Sandhya morning and evening without fail. In fact they are very particular in this respect, so much so, that without offering their prayers high caste men will by no means betake to their breakfast and dinner. Another remarkable custom prevailing in this country is, that in the house of every orthodox Brahmana and Kshatria there is a room or at least a corner allotted for the household deities, namely Siva, Durga, Vishnu, Ganesh and Surya (the five gods and goddesses authorised by Shankaracharya). But Durga, the daughter of Himavanta,

and the spouse of Siva figures as the most prominent deity in every household. She is represented by an image, or some sort of symbol, or Yantra,\* and is worshipped daily. The worshippers as also a large majority of higher class peoples in Garhwal mark their foreheads with three horizontal lines with white sandal, with a small circular mark of red sandal in the centre between the two eyebrows. The horizontal mark stands for Brahma, Vishnu, and Mahesh while the latter represents Durga.

The Vaishnavas in Gharwal imprint on their foreheads two perpendicular marks with white sandal to indicate the two feet of Vishnu.

The savites on the other hand mark their foreheads with ashes run in horizontal lines. But there is a limited number of Gyrhasties also who fall under the category of either of the last two classes.

Well populated localities have public temples of Siva, Durga and sometimes of Narayana. They are generally frequented by devoted men and women on festivals or other occasions for seeing the deities and offering prayers.

Village deities, such as Goril, Nagraja, Narsingh, Vhairava, Sketrapala, etc., seem to have been inherited from the aboriginal inhabitants of Gharwal who were grafted into the Aryan stock from time to time, specially during and after the Buddhist period, and are not forgotten. Each and every one of them is worshipped conjointly

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\* These comprise certain mystic and magical diagrams engraved on metallic plates, paper, or stone with certain mystic letters. They are believed to have the power of protecting the worshipper from ills due to the influence of evil spirits.

by village communities and often individually by the lowest strata of society. These people seem to have been brought under a sort of spell in connection with the worship of *Gramdevta* or village gods. Since the awe and respect with which such gods are regarded can scarcely be less in intensity than that with which the more important gods are looked upon.

Hero worship too is not uncommon in Garhwal. Pandavas and Bagdwals are worshipped annually with great veneration, and there is a prevalent belief, that those deities guard the villages from pestilence, vouchsafe good crops, and keep their herds free from epidemic diseases. Many men and women practice fasting, with a view to pleasing the deities or for achieving special objects. The principal fasts observed are :—“Ekadasi” in honour of Narayana (a fast commonly practised by the aged), “Chaturdasi” in honour of Siva and “Asthmi” in honour of Durga. All Garhwals observe fasts on the birth days of Siva and Krishna.

The practice of fasting on the *Sankrants*, (the first day of each month) is very prevalent in Garhwal and is observed in honour of Satyanarayana.\* It is the favourite fast of barren young women who hope thereby to please Satyanarayana and thus to obtain from him the blessings of motherhood.

Neither does the Garhwali seem slow in making pilgrimages to the shrines of Kedar and Badri. The hardships in visiting these *tirthas* are considered as a sort of penance and a glimpse of Siva and Vishnu does not only infuse in him a thrilling joy, but is also

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\* Seems to have been connected with this country sometimes after Mahabharata Epoch.



taken as a step towards spiritual salvation and absolution from sins. In cases of sickness, trials, and difficulties, he evinces the simple characteristics of the Aryans of the Vedic period, in as much as he will invoke the blessings of all the divinities known to him by praying with joined hands.

At other times he will get out his Horoscope from a corner safe of his house and run with pecuniary present to some well-known astrologer in order to ascertain whether the movements of any of the nine planets are uncharitable to him. If he is told that it is even so, and as a rule, the astrologer never fails to throw out some unfavourable hints, the poor man is apt to get shaky and he promptly takes steps to propitiate the perverse planets, with appropriate rituals and presents. Some of the planets are believed to be formidably recalcitrant such as "*Saturn*" "*Rahu*," and "*Ketu*." They are not appeased by trivial worship and failing them, the goddess Durga has to be propitiated by reciting the hymns of Chandi from Markanday Purana for several days and by animal sacrifices.

Other deities such as Siva are also approached by reciting (Siva Sahsaranam and Mahamirtan Jai Japa) the thousand names of Siva and by offering consecrated leaves of the Beal tree on the Siva lingam after chanting each name.

Certain shrines of Durga as Kalimath, Anshi, Kansmardani etc., are supposed to be pre-eminantly consecrated. The presiding deities of such temples are believed to be ever awake to the invocations of the worshippers, so much so that they bestow boons as soon as they are propitiated with the prescribed

elaborate rituals. Who can say how old Kalimuth is in Garhwal, when Vasista and Vyasa Muni mention it in their works.

The child like credulousness of a Garhwali can well be imagined when we see that he is tempted to descend to seeking favour from fatices, demons, and devils. The Garhwali believes in magic, sorcery, mantra, Tantra, and Kabacha. Females of low classes generally seek boon from such sources to get male offsprings or to safeguard themselves against evil influences.

When Cholera, smallpox and other epidemics break out, such divinities as Vairva, Kali, Goril, Narsingh, etc., are worshipped and certain men and women proceed from village to village dancing with frenzy, and sometimes crying wildly and singing noisily in order that the peasants may catch their faith that the deity really presides over them. This however, some times does more harm than good, since it is one of the causes of infection spreading from village to village.

The five Prayagas situated in Garhwal, are considered holy, bathing in these prayagas on *Utrayna* and *Bikhpai Sankrants* being esteemed very meritorious. Thousands of Garhwali men and women assemble at these places in January and April. In addition to these there are imps, fiends, devils, and demons who cause considerable dread in the mind of the Garhwali. Many poor men and women are afflicted with this mania.

The Garhwali appears to have accepted the combined system of Brahmanical, Buddhist,

and Aboriginal Mythology and is not inclined to adhere to one particular cult. All Hindu sects and cults are alike to him. From what we have stated above it is evident that the Garhwali is animated with an intense religious fervour. In troubles and anxieties we see him taking prompt steps to invoke his deities, because he has been taught by his scriptures, habits and usages that these are the only effective means to obtain him the blessings of God.

It is worth noting that the Garhwali mostly performs his worships vicariously. He however, understands not the real meaning of what he does. There is a common saying that one should not do or say anything the meaning of which he does not understand, as the consequence of such actions is abortive. But the case of a Garhwali is quite different for he has inherited strong tendency to attach firm faith in such actions. Faith of any kind has some effect manifest or nascent. Worship therefore when performed with sincerity, surely brings inspiration and response. Other pious actions such as fasting, bathing in the Ganges, frequenting the temples and performing the pilgrimages, show that the Garhwali has marked devotion and faith, leading up to the higher stage of holy living.

Apparently the Garhwali is found to be a confirmed polytheist. If, however, you enquire of an illiterate and a rustic any question regarding his preserver he will at once say that it is "Param—Ishwara." An intimate knowledge of the Garhwali will thus impress upon us the fact that he is any thing but a polytheist. The Garhwali is not gifted with a sharp intellect. A feeble mind cannot but begin with learning

what is easy. Idols, images, and symbols are, therefore, the most apt objects of his attention in the path of religion. For an undeveloped mind it is difficult to conceive "The Supreme Being" without His being manifested to him in some shape or form. Consequently vague and shadowy attributes can scarcely appeal to an unprepared frame of mind. He has, therefore, to mould his ideas of his Godhead in accordance with the traditions influencing his actions from his very birth. But it may be said to the credit of the Garhwali that his power of comprehension, poor as it is, is in a way compensated for by the earnestness, zeal, and sincerity with which he performs any kind of worship. The faith of the Hindus is, that God will be to them as they desire Him to be, Sri Krishna, so assured them "that in whatsoever way ye meditate on Me, in that way will I reveal myself unto you."

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## CHAPTER VI.

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### CHARACTER, FOOD AND DRESS OF THE PEOPLE.

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Hindu Sasbtras testify, that in the remotest past the saints, sages, and yogis of stern austerity inhabited the land in large numbers. They were of strong physique and high attainment. Evil, sin, and vice were unknown to them, since they were simple, pious, and truthful to the core. Their innocent, pure, and self-denying hermit life must have influenced the masses, living in their proximity. Moreover, in those days it was the duty of every Aryan to learn the Vedas by heart and as most of the Hindu sacred literature was being evolved in this land, the combined effect of this must have necessarily been to make the people follow in the wake of the scriptures and of their neighbours. The characterisation of the inhabitants of the country up to the end of the Epic period, appear to have been of a very high standard.

After that period, the principle of strict religious discipline and spiritual culture gradually declined in this country. But the inertia of a strong religious impulse had still been working in them, and they continued, as far as possible, to follow simplicity of character and adherence to truth. They yet re

membered to regard wordly pleasures and pains rather lightly. though at the same time, they grew to be afraid of the retribution for sin in the life to come. Such had been the standard of the character of the Garhwalis till Messrs. Trail and Batten saw this country. In support of this assertion we may cite the paragraph mentioned below from the "Law of the extra Regulation tracts by Mr. Whallay. In App. K. X. para. 16. Mr. Traill says:—"They are remarkably sensible of religious obligations, and are in consequence averse to incurring the responsibility of an oath. Their simplicity of character and common adherence to truth is, however, such as to render it extremely easy to elicit the whole truth without recourse to this ceremony."

In para. 17 Mr. Traill writes thus:—"This is, however, of rare occurrence and indeed, from the reason above mentioned the evidence of any witness is seldom required as the parties agree wholly in their statements and admission." Again in para. 35 Mr. Traill further bears testimony to the morality of the people thus:—"The total absence of theft and the extreme morality of the people in this province renders any provisions in regard to police unnecessary."

In the year 1837 Mr. Batten writes:--"In dealings they are honest, and trustworthy; in pecuniary transactions with one another, the villagers had no recourse to written engagements; bargains were concluded by the parties, by simply joining hands, in token of assent, and prove equally efficient and binding, as though they were secured in a way by parchments and seals."

From the statements made above by two high authorities, who have had along experience of the Garhwalis, it is obvious, that the morality, honesty, and truthfulness of the inhabitants of Garhwal up to the year 1837 had been exceptional. This is sufficient evidence for us to form the opinion that the Garhwalis inherited all the virtues, that as a rule, a highly religious colony, coupled with life in a mild and healthy climate and picturesque environment, can produce in a race. On the other hand we come across the following remarks as to the morality of the Garhwalis, made by other writers at the time when Mr. Traill was in charge of the administration of the country, as also at subsequent periods:—"The people as a whole may be regarded as honest and truthful to the trust imposed upon them. It rarely happens, that articles are pilfered or purloined. They are sober, frugal, and as a rule good tempered and mild, to be easily led away by the counsels of the others. Cheerful in youth, they appear to become idle after adolescence, preternaturally grave and even sullen. In parts of the district they are litigious and given to preferring groundless and exaggerated complaints. They are envious of each other, prone to equivocation and petty cunning, capable of gross falsehood. In the Garhwalis of other regions towards the plains indolence and inertness are prominent. He is often a miserable creature, habitually complaining, and when not under proper care and control is subject to poverty and truculent, offensive in prosperity or when in enjoyment of a little brief authority. In Northern Garhwal, the inhabitants appear to be more energetic, open and manly, like most of the hill men."



From the above statement it will appear that two serious charges are laid against the morality of the Garhwalis, viz.; habitual idleness and falsehood. Since they come from very trustworthy authorities, they are of very considerable weight. The reader would probably be surprised to find that for centuries past and even up to the year 1837, they proved to have been peculiarly free from these defects. But within the short course of half a century, all is changed and the people have fallen down the ladder of morality. What all this is attributed to? The chief cause to account for this is, that the importance the old people attached to the religious love and devotion gradually slackened in the new generation and at the same time illiterateness increased. It is natural that a person bends towards wrong only when he lacks in strict religious tenets. However, religion still retains more hold on the Garhwalis than on the people of the other parts of the Indian continent. The comparative freedom enjoyed by the Garhwalis from serious crimes such as murder, etc., is also due to their being more religious than their brethren in the lowlands. As to the idleness of the Garhwalis we find them at the present time differing much.

(a) The people of Lower Garhwal are tall and thin. They have poor muscles and sallow complexion.

**The distinguishing features of the Garhwalis.**

(b) The people of upper Garhwal are of small stature, well built, and sturdy. They have wheat-complexions, and are remarkable for their simplicity and truthfulness. Quiet home life is very dear to them. They have honesty in them, as in villages it

is often seen that they do not lock up their doors.

(c). The Bhutyas are small in size, but well built. They have small and oblong eyes, high cheek bones, and bear Aryo-Mongolian features. The men as well as the women are hardy and persevering, honest, frank and hospitable.

All the Garhwalis have some general characteristics. They are cowardly in sickness, and have a terror of death in epidemics. They are envious of the prosperity of their neighbours and will resort to every possible means for harming them. They are also very litigious; nevertheless on the whole they are good farmers and law abiding people.

Garhwalis seem to have inherited valiant qualities of a soldier from the remotest period. Leaving aside the legends of the great battle of Kuru-Kshetra which form the main subject of the National Epic Mahabharata, in which the various races of India were arranged on one side or the other, we cannot form any opinion as to who played the best part in the scene of war. There is, however, historical proof that the Garhwalis and Kumaonis fought very desperately at Charekar, when they were in Shah Shuja's service. In 1769 they kept the valiant Gurkhas in abeyance for a full one year, in spite of their numerical superiority and military tactics. But in the present gigantic conflict, the way in which the Garhwalis have shed their blood in the battle fields of Europe in the defence of the Empire, has become proverbial and this alone will add to the lustre of the land of the Sages.

So much has been said of the men. We shall  
 now proceed to speak something  
 of the fair sex. It has already  
 been stated, that Central Himalayas (Garhwal) had

**Women.**

been a seat of ascetics and pious men. It is therefore natural, that men and women brought up in such environments would undoubtedly be influenced by higher forces, and this had been the case in this land for centuries past.

Sakuntala, Drupadi, and Uma are the best illustrations to cite. All the three ladies had their birth in this country in the Vedic and Epic periods. They were matchless specimens of the jewel of womankind. They were ideal and virtuous wives, highly educated and religious. They are up to this time recognised as the ideals of the Hindu women. Even up to the present day the females of the three upper classes are imbued with the same spirit of religious life. To describe female characteristics, we shall have to divide them into three classes. *viz.*, Upper, Middle, and Lower.

(a) Upper class females have well marked Aryan features, fair complexion, and moderate stature. Their hair is generally long and black. The majority of them possess a healthy vigorous constitution, and a fine appearance. Their demeanour is modest and self possessed, and they are devoted and virtuous.

(b) The middle class consists of the peasantry who differ much in complexion and manners. They are exposed to the inclemency of the weather, and hence lose their beauty at an early age. At about thirty they begin to show wrinkles on their faces. They too are comparatively modest.

(c) The lower class comprises the Doms. The females of this class differ very much from the

preceding two classes in every respect. They are generally small and strongly built, of dark colour, and have generally woolly black hair. Their features are not so well marked. They are very filthy in person and apparel and are of a very low moral calibre.

(d) The Bhutya females are of moderate size and sturdy. They have Aryo-Mongolian features, and are industrious. Their rotundity, plumpness, and fair appearance make them very pleasant to be looked at

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### MARRIAGE.

Married life is a boon to both the sexes, whether high or low, irrespective of pecuniary and other circumstances. Almost every Garhwali would rather run the risk of a life-long misery of debt in marriage, than to remain a bachelor, on the pretext of getting a male offspring, which the Garhwalis believe to be one of the choicest gifts of God. Marriage is arranged generally by the parents of the bridegroom and bride, who whether grown-up or young have to submit to their parent's choice without a murmur and complaint.

When the girl is married she becomes a member of her husband's family, where she lives under the complete control of her mother-in-law. In fact for the first few years, she remains at the beck and call of her mother-in-law who spares no pains to mould her in such a useful form as to become a pleasant helpmate to her husband.

In Garhwal according to a Garhwali's notion or idea, it is a virtue on the part of a wife to share de-

Rightfully the obligations her husband owes to his parents and to other members of the family. A virtuous wife in Garhwal devotes her whole-hearted attention to the honour of her husband's family or household. The majority of the fair sex in the district, fall under this heading.

Hindu law givers or Smiriti compilers prescribe eight forms of marriage, but in Garhwal as elsewhere only two forms of marriage, are observed at the present day, *viz.*, the Brahma, and the Asura forms. (a) The Brahma form of marriage is that in which the bride is bestowed on the bridegroom with presents in consecration of the gift and a dowry according to the means of the bride's father. This form of marriage is commonly known as the *Kannyadan*. It is confined to a few higher classes of Brahmanas, Rajputs and Vaishyas. (b) The very common form of marriage that is in vogue amongst all classes of the Garhwalis is the mutual sale and purchase, *i.e.* to say, the parents of a bride demand a certain amount of money ranging from two hundred and upwards to two thousand rupees. The more the wedding parties are well to do and grown up, the higher is the price of the bride. With the money thus obtained, the father of the bride provides her with ornaments, dress and dowry, and meets other sundry expenses which are incurred on the performance of the marriage ceremony. Religious people spend all that is charged from the bridegroom, but the majority make a profit out of the price they obtain for their daughters. In this form of marriage, the bridegroom does not go himself to fetch the bride, but the bride is conveyed to the

bridegroom's house where the whole marriage ceremony is gone through in a cursory way and is termed the marriage by Ganesh Puja. In some of the parganahs in lower Garhwal, the debasing practice of selling their grown up daughters to the highest bidder is still prevalent.

Half a century ago, the Rakhshasha form of marriage among the Bhotyas, the Khasiyas and the Doims was not uncommon. A selected grown up girl of one's own caste was abducted by force or stealth, whether she was willing or not, and was kept on in concealment for some days, but on exposure the bridegroom had to pay the sum demanded by her father, months or days after the abduction. This form of marriage has now altogether been withheld or stopped in Garhwal.

It is a prevailing custom in Garhwal, that a girl of a high caste Brahmana or Kshatriya would rather like to remain unmarried, than to marry one of a lower caste family. This sentiment of race pride or caste prejudice is considerably growing in this county.

Early marriage is quite a new departure in Garhwal. Formerly grown up girls used to be betrothed. We have already mentioned above that among some of the people of this country marriage by abduction of young girls was in force. But the practice has since been changed, and now-a-days the higher classes of Brahmanas and Kshatriyas give away their girls in marriage while they are still of tender age, without paying any consideration to the ill effects of the practice, and the behest of the religious tenets.

In the Vedic period no man could know a woman before he had attained manhood. The Riks 21 and 22 show that the girls were married, when they were grown up, but not while they were children of seven or eight years of age as is done now in Garhwal. In the Anushasan Parva of Mahabharata, the marriageable age of girls is given as the attainment of puberty. Early marriage in both the Vedic and Epic periods was unknown, as we see, Sakuntala, Sita, Damyanti, Savitri, Kunti and Dropadi, all of them chose their husbands when they were grown up girls. The modern medical science strongly supports the precepts laid down in the Vedas and Mahabharata.

To place a girl of tender age under the care and protection of another family, quite different in disposition, manners, and environments, is cruelty and inhumanity from a humanitarian point of view. The pernicious custom had its origin from the time of Manu, who says that a female must be subjected to her father in her childhood, to her husband in her youth, and to her sons, when widow but she must never be independent. The marriageable age of a woman declared by Manu is eight or twelve.

Latter on, Yajnavalkya and Parasara also seem to have been in favour of early marriage ; the former enjoins to give girls away before menses appear ; while the latter says that the parents and the elder brother of the girl go to hell, on seeing her menstruant while yet unmarried. Both must have been lead to pass stringent laws by the consideration, that after puberty both male and female, are inclined to temptation alike. But at the same time both

the law givers seem to have overlooked the ill effects on the offsprings of such a marriage.

Receiving the doctrine prescribed by the above mentioned Rishi to be accurate, even then, the girls in Garhwal, as a rule begin to menstruate after the age of 16. Therefore the suitable marriageable age in Garhwal, at all events, is not before 16 years of age.

Polygamy is common amongst all the communities. This evil custom is of very ancient origin among the Aryans of India, and it prevails more or less amongst the Hindus all over India. The higher classes of Brahmanas and Rajputs, and especially the latter in Garhwal are more prone to this practice than other classes. The whole spirit of the Hindu laws in regard to marriage is in favour of the legal union between one man and one woman, but a little latitude is sometimes granted for the preservation of the race. It is said that a man may marry a second wife for the sake of progeny, but this should be done with the consent of his first wife in case she is barren. In addition to the race preservation, there is another strong motive predominant in Garhwal for polygamy. The bulk of the population is dependent on agriculture, which requires a good deal of manual labour. Slavery no longer exists. Coolie wages have nearly been doubled, and even at such an exorbitant cost a coolie can not be had just when he may be required. These facts generally account for the detestable practice of polygamy. Formerly the country consisted of much unoccupied land, the population was sparse, and living was cheap. Men



and women were truthful, and religiously trained; moreover, local laws on immorality were rigid and thus they dared not transgress such severe strictness of religion, and hence polygamy in all likelihood could thrive well. But now that the time has considerably changed, and the people are struggling hard for existence, the practice ought to be socially condemned as being wrong. Polyandry is unknown in British Grahwal, but is in vogue towards Jonsar and Rawin, in State Garhwal.

The more a family or a clan belongs to the higher class of the society, the greater are the restrictions of the law to which they are subjected. Amongst the Brahmanas and Rajputs of good social position, widows regard marriage as an indissoluble holy bond between two souls, which even death cannot sever; thus a widow does not either care, or is not allowed to remarry after her husband's death. Certain classes of Brahmanas and Rajputs have the custom of marrying a deceased elder brother's widow to the younger brother or cousin. This custom is only binding in a few communities. The offsprings of such a marriage are called *Bhoujeta*, and slightly descend in caste, although after a generation or two their birth inferiority is overlooked by their intermingling with people of the proper caste.

Most of the widows of Khasya community take up their residence with other men as mistresses and are known as *Dhantis*, without loss of caste. The children of such a union have by usage, all the rights and privileges of legitimacy. But this class of people are now showing a tendency to imitate

the customs of the higher classes.

Amongst the men of the lowest condition *i.e.* the Doms, a widow is at liberty to take residence with any man she chooses in her own caste, without any loss of rights to her offsprings. A widow in Garhwal is not subjected to any sort of hardships, as her sisters suffer in some parts of Bombay, Madras, Bengal and the United Provinces. In Garhwal she is treated with sympathy and those who are intelligent, experienced in life, and virtuous, enjoy every consideration in the family.

It will not perhaps be irrelevant to conclude this chapter without a reference to **Woman's Place.** woman's social position in Garhwal. Hindu Shastras assign the status of equality in every matter to man and woman ; woman is the half of man's body, "*Ardhangini*." However, we find a slight deviation from the rules in actual practice. Religiously she has equal rights with her husband, but in secular matters she enjoys a higher position than her husband. She is the mistress of the household. Every Garhwali woman below the rank of the highest, performs all domestic duties. She finds nothing menial in her occupations, the cowhouse, the dairy, the kitchen, the granary and the fields with numerous other offices, divides the daylong attention of the Garhwali woman. She shares her husband's obligations to the members of the family, and willingly saves her husband from the roughest labour, which even the Shastras prohibit from assigning to her. All women of well-to-do families in Garhwal clearly understand that wife and husband both have mutual trusts in life because they realise the ideal of

the spiritual union of their souls. In Garhwal, female virtue is believed to have its inspiration from the traditional love story of Uma, the daughter of Himavanta and Siva her lord, and the immaculate devotion of which she set an unparalleled example, is the highest ideal of the life of a religious Garhwali lady.

In the matter of imparting the privileges which a woman in this country enjoys, we are proud to say that Garhwal can fairly boast of occupying an eminent place. From Treta Yuga down to this day there has been no seclusion of the fair sex. Religiously and socially they enjoy a more elevated position in the house. A good deal of influence is brought to bear on the families by ideal wives; in fact we look upon them as "Griha Lakhshmi" or the goddess of the house. They enjoy every right in the household to gain the recognition of their sex. No Garhwali ever undertakes to do anything without consulting the females of the house. But many social abuses seem to have of late been creeping into the society. Women are growing less capable of conceiving the idea and spirit of religion and social self discipline. It will not thus be surprising to see some day or other the introduction of the Purdah system into the higher strata of the people of Garhwal.

The females in Garhwal load themselves with ornaments wearing the *Nuth*, nose ring of gold, hanging from the cartilage of the nose on the left side, and *Bulak* on the septum. Earrings (*Murkhala*) of silver or of gold according to means are worn on the cartilage of each ear. Bangles, bracelets, and *Paajeb*

weighing from thirty to forty tolas generally of silver are worn by females in opulent circumstances. Several rings "*Mundris*" on fingers and "*Polyas*" on toes are common ornamentation. A heavy ring "*Hansali*" weighing from forty to fifty tolas of silver or a *Mala* of rupees or of some other coin and in some cases of coral and of other beads, may not unfrequently be used as a necklace.

The dress of the peoples of different countries varies according to the climate and the degree of civilisation attained by its inhabitants. In India too, at the present day, there is a great diversity in dress among the peoples of the Punjab, United Provinces, Bengal, Madras, Bombay and Central India. Comparing the modern costumes of India with those of their ancestors of the Vedic and Epic periods, we find a considerable change even in Garhwal which is still far back in civilisation. It will be necessary, therefore, to describe the primitive dress of the peasantry of Garhwal to enable our readers to discover the difference.

The ancient dress according to Mahabharata consisted of two oblong pieces of cloth, one wrapt round the loins from the waist below, and the other rolled like the figure of eight round the upper part of the body,—the arms remaining bare. They did not use a second garment underneath; trousers and jackets were unknown to them. No mention is made in the Mahabharata about the head gear, since most probably they used another piece of cloth which served both for the males and the females. The Aryan female dress was either exactly the same as that of the male,

or might have been one broad oblong piece of cloth, uncut and unsewn, reaching down to the ankles and fastened on to the shoulders by a metal fastener or formed into a knot. "In the glimpses" says Miss Noble, "we catch the heroic lovers, Sita and Rama, wandering in the forest. Sita wears the *Sari* and follows behind her husband as she might to-day. We see it in the Egyptian pictures of the goddesses and if we remember, that it is essentially a piece of cloth unsewn, we shall find it also in Greek sculptures." The *Sari* thus seems to have been worn from time immemorial. In Garhwal the male and female costumes until 1850 mostly resembled that of the Epic period, as will be seen from the description given by Mr. Batten in the Settlement Report of 1850, who describes them thus:—"The dress of the peasantry is very primitive, consisting of a blanket thrown round the shoulders fastened across the breast by skewers of wood or metal, and girt round the waist by a *Kamarband* of woollen stuff or a rope formed of goats hair, neatly plaited. Beneath the blanket is a breech cloth "*Langoti*" kept up by means of a string round the waist. The head dress is a thick woollen cap. The legs and arms are uncovered except in cold weather, when trousers and a coat of blanket stuff are worn. There are only two colours of materials in use, viz., dark brown and a dirty grey. Towards the plains the dress is assimilated to that of the population there."

Let us now give the components of the modern costume of the Garhwal peasantry, we shall describe it according to the climate of the district. In warmer localities the people dress themselves throughout the year with a cotton cloth jacket

"*Mirzai*." A small cotton cloth cap forms their head covering. During the winter months a light quilt *Razai* is used to cover the upper part of the body. Females wear a *Sari* below the waist, one end of which serves as a headgear. The breast is protected by a petticoat (*Angiya*) made of Chintz or Velvet.

Residents of the temperate climate, who form the bulk of the population, clothe themselves with a blanket or hempen cloth in the manner described by Mr. Batten, which is called *Kutha-gati*,\* but in addition to it a cotton cloth *Mirzai* is now worn underneath by a majority of the people. During the winter season, trousers of cloth or wool are brought into use. The style of the female attire is like that of the warm climate, but instead of the *Sari* they clothe themselves with "a woollen stuff" called *Lava*, two ends of which are fastened across the right shoulder by skewers of silver and girt round the waist with a cotton cloth *Kamarband*, a separate piece of cloth called *Chader* or *Jhulka* serves as a head dress.

The Bhutyas wear a cotton *Mirzai* under a pattu *Chapkan*, girdled round the waist by a rope of goat's hair "*Thapka*" or cloth "*Kamarband*." Their trousers are mostly made of pattu and are worn all the year round. A scarlet or blue English broad-cloth *topi* is their favourite head wear. The females wear a skirt of chintz and over it *Lava* in the same manner as described above but they leave one fold on each side ungirdled to enable them to wrap their hands in, when it is very cold. Their breast dress consists of an *Angia* made either of pattu, or velvet, or cotton cloth, with breast supporter *Kanchwa* underneath.

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\* In Sanskrit "*Kutha*" signifies blanket and "*gati*" the body.

Since the time that the Garhwalis have been enlisted in the Indian Army, the peasantry of the country are every day growing fond of clading themselves with English dress. In large festival gatherings, one would surely observe an almost bewildering variety of costumes. There is the primitive dress in all its purity; there is the English coat in various fanciful modifications; some have adopted it without its neck appendages, some without pants and boots; a few will be witnessed in all their integrity except the headgear; there is the pattu *Chapkan* of Bhutya, there is the mixed dress of the shabby coat and the blanket (*Kutha Gati*) over it. In short, the dresses represent a huge collection of fanciful coloured apparels. Boots and socks have largely come into use. No Garhwali has yet adopted the English dress *in toto*. There has been but a very slight change in the female attire.

By reviewing the dress of the peasantry in Garhwal we are constrained to remark, that their dress is simple, economical, and well suited for the various seasons of the year and climate of the different parts of the country. The peasants are always labouring in the fields in the scorching heat of summer and during the rainy season. They are apt to suffer from the effects of both the sun and rain. But all such hardships and the after effects thereof are in a way averted by woollen clothes, which keep them cool during exertion, and warm after the body has perspired, so that they are saved from chill and exposure to heat alike. Woollen clothes do not smell much, even if not washed for a long time. The working classes generally select a dark brown or grey colour for their dress.

It may be remembered that grey cloth has much absorbing power.

The female attire of the temperate localities is economical, soft, loose, airy, and more or less waterproof. It ensures a complete and free movement of the whole body, when it is being exerted. In Upper Garhwal, another garment is prepared from the hair of goats known by the name of *Daukhi*. It is warm, and light, but a little rough to wear. It is a good waterproof, very handy, and its price too, is so to speak trifling. It is worth improving for the use of the higher classes of people. Our own opinion is that climatically speaking the dress of the Garhwalis is quite a suitable one and at the same time seems to be practically based on hygienic principles.

The primitive people of Garhwal appear to have been meat eaters. Their

**Food.** successors the Indo-Aryans, naturally followed their example, for, it is human nature to copy the majority. The great Epic Mahabharata also points out that the Aryans were by taste and habit not averse to taking meat. We quote the following stanza from it for the information of our readers, viz :—उड्यानां मांस परमं, मद्यानां गोरोतोत्तरम्, तैक्षोत्तरम् दरिद्राणां, भोजनं भारत वर्धनम् ॥

३६ ॥ ३४ अथ्यो.

Flesh of various beasts with cereals formed the principal diet of the rich. Milk and its products constituted the food of the middle class people, while Indian corn and oleaginous substances comprised the food of the poor people.



Let us now examine the dietary of the modern Garhwal peasantry and see if any modification consonant with modern science has been introduced into it. The Garhwali is almost wholly vegetarian in practice, but not by profession and principle. His breakfast and supper consist of bread made of wheat flour, or a mixture of *mandua* and *amaranthus* or *mandua* alone or a combination of barley and *mandua* with vegetables of the season. The midday meal, being the most sumptuous, consists of rice, *jhangora*, *dall* or *jholi*. The latter is prepared from cheese seasoned by a little *Jhangora* and the small leaves of pumpkin or *amaranthus*, and some vegetable curry finish his fare. Poor people dispose of the greater portion of grain in the market to meet the other exigencies of life and manage to live on their scanty fare of cheese eked out by green garden stuffs. Such is the common dietary of the peasantry in Garhwal, while fresh spring water furnishes them with drink. Flesh and fish are looked upon as rare luxuries. With this frugal diet the Garhwali is astir before daybreak, and gets through two or three hours hard work in the morning before breakfast, or perhaps another period of work before returning home with a big load of one *dôna*, equal to thirty-two seers or more, on his back or on his head.

The insufficiency of his dietary which modern science indicates is compensated for by the grace of the pure Himalayan open air which feeds him herself for the greater part of the day while he is engaged in outdoor avocations.

It proves that the Garhwali is endowed with singularly strong vitality and energy. Notwithstanding this sort of life, men and women are remarkably healthy and robust. At all hours they are blithesome and jovial, singing love songs, or the songs from the Mahabharata, Ramayana, etc.

Potatoes, beans, pumpkins and cucumber grow abundantly in Garhwal and are largely consumed by the people. Edible roots such as *Tairu*, *Mungia* and others are boiled, salted and eaten in plenty.

Of the fruits, peaches, walnuts, oranges, apricots, several species of berries and plantain grow plentifully and are largely consumed by the inhabitants.

On festive occasions, the Garhwali indulges in rich food consisting of *Puries*, *Halwa* and *Pakorās*. A treat of rich dishes is given to the Brahmanas, Sadhus, kinsmen and relatives, at the time of marriage and other celebrations.

There is a peculiar custom prevalent in Garhwal, viz., bread and vegetable, cooked even by a Khasa is partaken of by a Brahmana and Kshatrya without caste distinction. This custom seems to have been observed from very ancient times. For, we know from Kedar Khand, Ch. 206, that Rishi Vasista when meditating in Kedar Himalaya, did not observe rigidity or strictness in regard to eating and other usages pertaining to it. As for rice and dal, the capricious nature of the Garhwal people seems to have been brought in force from the Puranic period, when many clans of Brahmanas and Rajputs emigrated from various parts of India and an advance is being made by them towards a higher level

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of caste and respect and at the same time, probably, the stringency of rules in eating rice food enforced in the country.

About six centuries ago Raja Ajai Pal noticed that many indigenous customs and caste barriers hindered the efficient discharge of public duties and so that, he made it a rule that rice cooked by the Sairolas must be taken by all tribes and castes in this country without murmur. Since then it is almost a binding custom among the majority of castes, with the exception of a few Kshatriyas and Brahmanas who cannot eat rice cooked by a Brahmana other than their own priest. Among Rajputs, a tribe called Khati Gusains, curiously enough, do not eat rice cooked even by their own *Purohita*, not to speak of others and, it is said, that they do not even undergo a pilgrimage to Badrinath, simply for the reason that there they shall be obliged to partake the *Mahaprashad*. Similarly Bartwals of Malkoti and Aswals of Sila have a prejudice in serving rice meal prepared by their females. Many Rajputs and Brahmanas while eating rice in some of the communities they intermarry with, observe touch-me-not.

On the whole the Garhwali still preserves the habit of simple, frugal vegetarian dietary of his ancestors, and attains health and fair longevity. Viewing the present mode of their dietary, from the point of modern science, from their pecuniary circumstances and the climate and environment of their inhabitation we think it to be the best suited for them.

It will not be inappropriate to mention here another great laxity in eating which is observed at

Badri Nath in Garhwal and in Puri (Jagannath in Orissa). At both the places the rules of caste observation in regard to food were done away with by Sankaracharya, most probably with a view to setting an example to the people of India, especially of Madhyadesha, Bihar, and Bengal, where from the Epic period forward, rigid caste observance in eating appears to have long held. This must have appeared an absurd practice to Sankara who was himself the embodiment of the highest ideals of Hinduism. Before *Narayana* all men are regarded as equal and the outward signs of this equality are patent in the fact that all may eat the food together irrespective of caste, position, wealth or other distinctions. He ruled that food prepared within the temple precincts to the Deity should become consecrated and could be taken by all the three higher classes of Hindus without observing the "touch-me-not" custom.

In Badri Nath, rice, dal, vegetables, etc., are prepared by the Dimri Sairola Brahmanas in the temple kitchens and they pass for *Mahaprashad* after they are offered to Badri Narayana. To eat *Mahaprashad* in these two *tirthas* is one of the chief rites of pilgrimage. No pious Hindu in health would infringe this rule. It is then bought by the *Pandas* and distributed amongst their *Yajamans*. All eagerly taste the *Mahaprashad* irrespective of caste distinctions; no *chhutt* or contamination by touch being observed within the Badri Nath town (Puri). This franchise alone has made Puri a true civic and religious unit in spite of caste complexities

This *Mahaprashad* is regarded so highly consecrated by all orthodox pilgrims that the cooked rice and dal are dried in the solar heat and taken home to be distributed among their family members and friends, who too eagerly accept it as being a consecrated *prashad* of Narayana.

Sankaracharya was a true Vedantist Sanyasi and free from caste bias. His object in actuating this distinctive feature of pilgrimage in the two shrines of India might have been that, men of higher culture would bear in mind that God is Omnipresent, and that the food wherever it is served is according to the Vedic and other Hindu Sashtic rites to be presented to *Ishwara* before serving. It is, therefore, as consecrated as the *Mahaprashad* at Badri Narayana and Jagan Nath. A general reform might take place gradually in India. But alas! Sankara's broad views did not meet any favourable reception beyond the limits of the above-mentioned two *tirthas*. It appears, however, that with the spread of Western ideas and education the restrictions about food are being slowly remitted from India.

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## CHAPTER VII

### GARHWAL A SEAT OF PILGRIMAGE.

The various shrines of India seem to have sprung up with the growth of moral laws, promulgated by wise religious teachers. They are apt to expand the religious faith of undeveloped intellect, in as much as the holy places, abound in natural solemnity of every description. The northern *tirthas* appear to be typical in this respect and their sacredness is thus quite a matter of course.

Pilgrimage is generally undertaken by a person with true religious earnestness in him. As a result of it, his religious susceptibilities are widened to a degree, his nobler qualities of nature get more and more developed, and he learns to shun selfish and egotistic thoughts. Finally, the absence of baser qualities, which disturb the human mind, engenders a sort of spiritual calm in him, and he reaches the path leading to the throne of God. This probably accounts for the firmness of the religious faith which actuates an orthodox Hindu. He believes that without faith no progress in any religion in the world is possible.

It is well known that pilgrimage has been resorted to by almost every people of the earth; for instance, the English people have not altogether forgotten the traditions in this respect. The long and difficult journey to Bethlehem, where Jesus the Christ was born, was thought meritorious and sacred by the early Christians. Long after the reign of Richard the first, the English people used to make pilgrimage to Jerusalem. The Buddhists

used to come from very long distances to visit the Niranjani in Gaya, where Gautama achieved Nirvana. The Muslims too evince an amount of enthusiasm in pilgrimage. Hundreds of thousands of pious Muslims yearly flock to Mecca, Medina, and other holy places.

Yoga Vasista, the pre-eminent Hindu philosophy states in section III, that Rama Chandra, who flourished at the end of the Rig-Vedic period, performed pilgrimage at Mandakni, Kedar, and Mansarovara. Later on in the Mahabharata we find that the five Pandavas made a similar pious excursion to the sacred places in the Himavanta. Evidently then there were certain places in Garhwal, which were recognised by Aryans, of sacred memories and probably they existed in Garhwal long before Rama Chandrá's visit. Mr. Row points out in Hindu iconography, that indications of image worship are to be found among Hindus from the Vedic age, but at the period we are speaking of, we find no proof of the establishment of images and temples in Gharwal. The appellation of the holy places mentioned above, do not express any reference to the image establishment. It is quite clear from Yoga Vasista, that the Rishis of the Vedic period found Garhwal the most glorious temple of Nature.

The charm and sweetness of Nature exhibited by Garhwal Himalayas persuaded them to absorb in deep contemplation in those localities to penetrate the Vail (Nature) to secure the ecstatic vision. Nature's phenomena are every where as a matter of fact, but to develop this consciousness they must have found them more distinctive in that locality, or, there might have been some other spiritual interpretation, by which the northern shrines have grown in intense religious importance from very ancient times.

All the Garhwal *tirthas* from Jamanotry to Badri-Narayana are situated at an average height of about 10,000 feet above the sea level. Glacial chill reigns for six months and bracing cold characterises the summer season of the place. All these places are hung over by perpetual snow clad mountains. In ancient times to visit them, one had to undergo very toilsome and risky journeys. Great privation and the life long saving of a Hindu was considered as nothing when spent for the purpose of making pilgrimage of them. Before the advent of the British Government pilgrimage to Northern *tirthas* as a matter of fact, was not within the reach of Hindu peasants. Traditions, however, go so far as to prove that in spite of many hindrances, hundreds of orthodox Hindus were annually fired with the strong instinct of visiting the northern shrines. Very few of them, however, returned home safely, the majority perishing in the undertaking. Only the love (Bhakti) could have had prompted them to undergo the length of surrendering themselves to the service of the Most High. Of the Northern *tirthas*, Jamanotri, Gangotri Kedar, and Badri-Narayana are the places of eminent sanctity. But importance is attached to pilgrimage being made to all sacred places in India.

The time for pilgrimage to these places begins from *Bikshpat Sankrant*, (about the 15th April of each year) and ceases in the month of November. The starting point to begin with in this pilgrimage is Hardwar. A person of an inquisitive nature will find in his journey indications which the various phases of the Hindu religion have run through from the Vedic period and till now, some flowing in sentiment while others in example. Hardwar itself will unfold to him occurrences of far more ancient times *Satyayuga* when he is led to the spot where the old God



**Daksha** (the Planetary spirit, who is believed to guide the motion of the Rishi Chakra consisting of the 27 Asterisms) celebrated his great *Yagma* on which occasion Sati his daughter destroyed herself. The site vividly reminds the traveller of the legend of Sati's testing Rama's god-head by assuming the form of Sita, when the latter was taken away by Ravana to Ceylon. For Sati's treading the path of such deception and unrighteousness, Mahadeva forsook her as his wife. But on her supplicating to God, to get her body dissolved, the *sacrifice* of Daksha was devised by the gods. All the celestial beings were invited, save Mahadeva and Sati, in order that Sati might be moved to anger and thus perish herself in the *leaping high sacrificial flames*. The device proved a success and Sati came to be reborn in Garhwal Himalaya as Uma or Parvati and was remarried to Shankara.

Similarly Rishikesh the next stage, represents a clear illustration of an ideal hermit life of the Rishis of yore. One will find hundreds of reed thatched huts of Sadhus who enjoy the life of religious discipline and are blessed with the cherished for beatific vision. Before describing the main shrines of Badari and Kedar, it will not be out of place, to give a brief description of Gangotri and Jamanotri, for the road leads to those two places from Rishikesh. Both of them are situated in the south-west of the Garhwal State and are pre-eminently sacred places.

The following account of Gangotri and Jamanotri has been extracted from the Journal of tour in Garhwal Himalaya by Mr. Fraser. The spot which obtains the name of Jamanotri, says Mr. Fraser, "is in fact, very little beyond the place where the various

streams formed on the mountain brow, by the melting of masses of snow, unite in one and fall into a basin below. To this basin, however, there is no access, for immediately above this spot the rocks again rise over the stream, and, though not so lofty as those below, they interpose a complete bar to further progress in the bed of the torrent. Between the two banks the view is closed by the breast of the mountain which is of vivid green from perpetual moisture, and is furrowed by time and torrents into numerous ravines. Down these ravines are seen trickling the numerous sources of this branch of the Jamuna. Above this green bank, rugged, bare and rocky cliffs arise, and the deep calm beds and cliffs of snow, towering above all finish the picture. Noble rocks of varied huge form, crowned with luxuriant dark foliage and the stream foaming from rock to rock, form a foreground not unworthy of it.

“At the place where it is customary to perform ablution, the rock on the north-east side of the river is very steep, exhibiting different shades and colours. The structure also is laminous, and from these laminae run several small streams of warm water foaming together in a considerable quantity. There are several other sources, and one in particular, from which springs a column of water of very considerable size, which is situated in the bed of the river between two large stones and over it falls a stream of the river water. This water is much hotter than that already noticed. The hand cannot bear to be kept for a moment in it, and it emits much vapour.” Mr. Fraser states that he could not find the least acidity of taste nor any sulphurous or other smell in the water. It is exceedingly pure, transparent and tasteless. The spot for bathing is at that point where one hot spring of a consider-

able size rises in a pool of cold water and rendered it milk-warm. Mr. Fraser asserts that there are numerous sources of the warm water, many springing from the rocks and gravel and rise to some height in the air. Sometimes they are lost when the river takes its course towards them. These springs have particular names such as "Gaurikund" and "Taptkund." In Jumanotri there is no image nor any temple. According to the story, which the Brahmanas furnish, the warm springs are being attributed to the stern meditation of the twelve Rishis who followed Siva when he took flight from Ceylon to Jamanotri and they have since been in deep contemplation upon Siva.

Now let us describe the next highly sacred seat of Hindu pilgrimage called Gangotri. The road leading to these northern holy places formerly was very rough, rocky and dangerous, winding along in some places, ascending and descending across the faces of deep precipices and down deep ravines, at times leading along banks of loose earth and sloping where the face of the mountain has fallen, thus rendering the footing exceedingly uncertain and difficult. In short, access to Jamanotri and Gangotri was very difficult and only staunch orthodox people used to frequent these *tirthas* and even now they are resorted to by a very few.

As regards Gangotri, Mr. Fraser writes:—"the scene where pilgrimage is made, is worthy of the mysterious sanctity attributed to it, and the reverence with which it is regarded. We have not here the confined gloominess of Bhairon Ghati. The actual dread, which cannot but be inspired by the precipices and torrents, and perils of the place, here gives way to a sensation of awe imposing, but not embracing what might be compared to the dark and

dangerous pass in the centre of the ravines of a former world ; for most truly there is little here that recalls the remembrances of that which we seem to have quitted (Bhairon Ghati).

“ The bare and peaked cliffs which shoot to the sky yield not in ruggedness of elevation to any we have seen; their ruins lie in wild chaotic masses at their feet, and scantier wood imperfectly relieves their nakedness. Even the dark pine firmly roots itself in the deep chasms, which no time can wear out. Thus on all sides the prospect is closed except in front of the east side where from behind, a mass of bare spires with four huge lofty snowy peaks arise. These are the peaks of the Kudra Himalaya. There could be no finer finishing, no grandeur close to such a scene.

“ It is easy to write of rocks and wilds, of torrents and precipices; it is easy to tell of the awe which such scenes inspire; style and descriptions are common and hackneyed. But it is not so simple, to many surely not very possible, to convey an adequate idea of the stern and rugged majesty of some scenes, to paint their lovely desertness or to describe the undefinable sensation of reverence and dread that steals over the mind while contemplating the death-like ghastly calm that is shed over them. When we are under such emotions, at such moments, we remember our homes, our friends, our firesides and all social intercourse with our fellows and feel our present solitude and our distance from all dear ties ; how vain it is to strive at description, surely of such a scene is Gangotri. Nor is it independent of the nature of the surrounding scenery, a spot which lightly calls forth powerful emotions. We were now in the centre of the stupendous Himalayas, the loftiest and perhaps the most rugged range of mountains in the world. We were at the acknowledged source of that noble river, which is

equally an object of veneration, and a source of fertility, plenty and opulence to Hindustan, and the holiest shrine of Hindu worship, which these holy hills contain. These are surely striking considerations combining with the solemn grandeur of the place to move the feelings strongly."

The pilgrims who visit Jamanotri and Gangotri, proceed straight on *via* Panwali pass to Triyugi and thence to Kedar but very few undertake this tedious journey. Kedar and Badri are the most frequented places and, therefore, the majority of the pilgrims pass on from Hardwar to Rishikesh and thence to the shrines referred to above. Mr. J. M. Clay has published a useful pamphlet, fully describing each stage, the distances, etc., for the guidance of the pilgrims. Space is not available for describing in detail all the stages, but among them, which concerns the sculptures of historical value will only be briefly dealt with in this chapter. As the pilgrim advances onwards, he must needs associate himself with other equally zealous co-travellers, instinct with the same religious earnestness, so that, the traveller will meet them marching generally in couples or in groups of tens and twenties, old and young mingled together, different in type and dress, all merry, now and then pouring out benediction to Kedar and Badari Narayana. The denominations of certain localities which the pilgrim passes through, go by the name of saints, royal sages and anchorites of by-gone ages; for instance, Luxmon-Jhula, Tapoban, Dasratha-chal, Bhagirathi, Sita-bari, etc., call forth in his mind a sort of more love and faith.

For the four or five days his journey is confined to the banks of the Ganges among bits of beautiful scenery, making halts in small inns called *chatties* or reed huts; high or low, literate or rustic, all seek shelter under one roof. Purdah there is none; men and women undertaking the sacred journey

must needs have to bid farewell to natural shyness. Faith, reverence, simplicity and pure-mindedness, are the elements with which the mind of the pilgrim is inspired for the time being.

On the fifth or sixth day, he reaches Srinager a town deriving its name from a mystic diagram (Sriyantra) engraved upon a stone altar, which is said to have been thrown into the river\* by Sankaracharya. We have already described in Chapter IV, that when the Aryans migrated into Garhwal, they were opposed by Kol-asur and other powerful aboriginal chiefs, at Srinager who fought very bitterly; but the struggle ended in the final victory of the Aryans. There is evidence enough to show, that Srinager has been a city ever since. There must have been several towns which were destroyed by some natural causes such as floods, etc., which once swept the town, established by Raja Ajai Pal in about 1400 A.D., as the geographical situation of the valley renders it subject to such a disaster. "The Sriyantra" says Mr. G.N. Row in his book on Iconography, "is supposed to have the power to protect the worshippers from ills due to the influence of evil spirits or deities, and to bestow on him happiness, wealth and eventually liberation from birth, and more specially on those who worship the Devi".

The "Sriyantra" traditions have been inherited in Garhwal from an ancient period and there is nothing to prevent us in believing it to be true as traditions are often the true history of a country. Aborigines were particularly devoted to Mahadeva and Durga and they were profound believers in the mysteries of magic. Taking these points into consideration we are disposed to think that the "Sriyantra" at Srinager must have its origin from them. In ancient times human sacrifice was practiced here. Sankaracharya

must have tried to the best of his ability to prevent its propagation, as he was deadly against *Tantrakism* and it is quite possible of his having destroyed it. Of the many old temples of Srinager only one, i.e., of Kamleshwara is still extant, while all the others have been swept away by the Gohna flood.

From Srinager to Rudraprayaga the attention of a pilgrim will be arrested at places by ordinary stones made into objects of worship, and placed on the road side. In such cases it is not the object of worship, though it is worshipped in reality. The object of it is purely to make the pilgrims present something, to the so-called deity, which becomes the property of the priest. Except the beautiful forest there is nothing else remarkable.

From Rudraprayaga onward, the Mandakini glen will present to the pilgrim in some places its scenery of gorgeous spectacle and wild beauty. At short distances here and there, a scene of temples with a variety of sculptures, old remains and relics will captivate his attention, in fact the whole Mandakiniglen appears to be a series of lessons on the birth and extinction of wave after wave of the Hindu religious development even from pre-historic ages. It seems that each Hindu reformer in his turn established his favourite deities in the very heart of those places ; for example, Agastyamuni, Phata, Bhaitoo and Nala indicate signs of Vedic, Epic, Buddhist, Sankarite and Puranic Hinduism and Vaishnavism.

On the other hand certain places believed to have once flown with a tumultuous roar of water with its frolicsome waves, have now become busy haunts of human beings and gardens of great fertility.

For instance, Agastyamuni twelve miles from Rudraprayaga seems to have been such a place but now is of great religious importance. Miss Noble, writes about these places at great length, in her diary from which we extract a brief statement for the information of our readers.

"Rishi Agastyamuni" says Miss Noble, "had done his *tapasya* here. The same is told of Kashmir, a valley formed in the same way as this. Comparing the two and remembering that the Rishi is said to have drunk up the ocean, we were inclined to regard the tale as a geographical myth, referring to a time when the valley was a lake. The soil is so evenly placed here, as also in the vale of Srinager, that there is no room to doubt that it really was once a lake, and that, geologically speaking, at an age not long gone by. Are myths, like this of Agastyamuni, only dim memories of something seen by primitive man, or are they a kind of Physical Geography deliberately invented for educational purposes? The last suggestion does not sound so absurd at the place itself, as it certainly does on paper.

"The great court, they told us, was the site of Agastyamuni's *tapasya*, and he was commemorated by an image in the principal chapel. There was a stone *Gaddi* in the middle with a smaller seat beside it, which the people regarded as the throne of Ram Chandra.\* This is only one of the many signs of the ancient and deep-seated impression made on this region by the Ramayana. All through our visits to sacred spots, we were apt to find that the age of Rama was used as an indication of profound antiquity. But besides this, there are a thousand interest-

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\* Philosophy of Vasista confirms Rama's visiting these localities.



ing scraps. In the porch there is an image of Nar-singha. In some of the chapels, there are plaques and masks of the Nine Planets, of Narda, of Ganesh, and of old Buddhist carvings.

"There is also a chapel dedicated to Shringi Rishi, the son of Shamika, and there is an ordinary Siva in an old square water course, while outside there is an emblem that ought to be famous for its peculiarity of form, a *dharma chakra*, that is really a Siva of pre-Sankaracharyan type. The people call it a Brahmanmurti, which fact is again almost as important as the form itself. Four wheels or *chakras* are placed one on each side of the top of a short pillar. The top of the pillar is a cube as is also its foot; but its shaft is octagonal. The cube surmounted by the octagonal shaft, surmounted again by a thimble shaped top, is the form of Siva, which was common before Sankaracharya".

From Agastyamuni to Kedar Nath, the whole tract seems to have been an antiquarian theatre of the Hindu religion. Within its boundaries the pilgrim will find the striking feature in the landscape the number of temples at short distances consisting of images of various gods and goddesses from a very early age until mediæval Vaishnavism. The most notable sculptures found are noted as under.

|                |   |                          |
|----------------|---|--------------------------|
| Guptakashi ... | { | Visawanatha.             |
|                | { | Narayana.                |
|                | { | Ardhanari Siva.          |
| Nalla ...      | { | Temple of Nalla.         |
|                | { | Ancient Saivite remains. |
|                | { | Bodhisatwa and Jai-      |
|                | { | stambha of Anekamala.    |

|           |     |  |
|-----------|-----|--|
| Bhaitoo   | ... | { Satya-Narayana.<br>Birbhadra (Siva).<br>Lakshmi-Narayana.<br>Kirti stambha.<br>Old form of Siva. |
| Gaurikund | ... | { Parvati. and pre-Sakara-<br>Charyan (Siva).  |
| Kedarnath | ... | { Siva Sankara-Charyan.<br>Satya-Narayana.<br>Nine forms of Devi.<br>Old form of Siva.             |

A few miles above Nalla the scenery is extremely pleasing. Of its beauty one can not say enough. Higher up above Triyugi the glen becomes steeper and wilder with tremendous gorges and with many a wild stream shooting out of its source and tumbling down from rock to rock. The roar of the river is such in some places that one gets almost deaf. The hoary mountains above Rambara with their wildly sublimed scenery and a variety of flowers spontaneously growing at their feet make one forget the existence of anything save and except their Creator.

The Kedarnath temple is situated on the base of the Kedarnath peak, on the left bank of the Kedar-Ganga, and has a height of about 12,000ft. The place is colder than Badrinath ; most probably when the temple was first built in this spot, it must have been on the edge of a glacier which now has retreated to the distance of a mile. In Kedarnath, heap of natural rock is the object of worship, and is believed to be the Sankaracharyan Siva. There is also a temple of Satya-Narayana, built by the side of a spring in the

village street. There is another small temple which contains "the nine forms of Devi and pre-Shankara-charyan Siva."

A few miles to the north of Kedar Nath, is the vast snowy expanse which the Indians call "the path to *Swarga*." In ancient time the Sadhus and other religious men used to visit these glaciers for the sake of self immolation.

The other notable places of sanctity on the left bank of the Mandakini worth studying are Kali-muth, Madmaheshwara, Ukhi muth, Tungnath, Anchi, and Gopeshwara. All of them bear marks of their early existence. We, shall however, deal with only those places which are situated by the pilgrim road.

Ukhi is a village which is situated just opposite to Guptakashi on the left bank of the Mandakini and is said to be the identical place where Usha, the daughter of Van-Asur, used to live. The small temple close to the yard of the Muth is still extant and is much consecrated. The chapel must have been built in her memory. Sankara-charya, perhaps chose the place for the monastery of Kedar-Nath Rawal on account of its being noted as the residence of a lady who exercised a powerful influence upon her age.

Tungnath is 12 miles from Ukhi-muth and is situated on a high peak. It is out of the main road but an easy road of two miles from Chobta leads up to the temple where there is a Sankara-charyan Siva Lingam. There are also a number of other images, one of which has the appearance of a Buddhist image.

This place affords a fine birds eye view of the entire snowy range from Jamnotary to Badrinath and the country in front of it.

Gopeshwara which is twelve miles away from Chobta, is a well populated village where there is a large temple dedicated to Siva "Gopinath, the Lord of cows." The local legend runs thus:—

A cow which went a grazing to the jungle found that her milk was spontaneously coming out to fall on a natural Siva in the rock. This place was taken as an altar, says the story, and a temple was built over it. The place abounds in Sivas of pre-Sankara Charyan type—cube, octagon, and thimble shaped top—and even contains two at least of the older four headed form, with one later specimen covered with what Miss noble took to be the feet of the Lord, but said by the country people to be a crore of heads. There was a small Chaitya-shaped shrine containing one of the four headed Sivas, under a tree. The Rawal says that this temple has been here since the days of Rama.

One of the most remarkable things about the place is a trident of victory of king Aneka Mala, made of ancient swords, with an inscription.

A descent of two miles from Gopeshwara will take the pilgrim to Alkananda valley at Chamoli, the Sub-divisional Head Quarters of the District. The Tibetan road thence takes him straight off to the shrine of Badri—Narayana. This valley, as far as Joshimuth is deficient in subjects for iconographic study.

The latter place which is about twenty seven miles from Chamoli, is one of the four *muths* established by Sankara-Charya for his disciples and the winter seat of the Rawal "Mahant" of Badrinath. This place has a group of seven temples dedicated to Narayana, Nine forms of Durga, Pre-Sankaracharyan Siva, Ganesha, and Narsingha, respectively. Close to the temple there is a roofed spring named "Narsingha Dhara". *Skanda Purana Kedar Khanda* discloses several legends which show Joshimath to be an ancient mythical seat.

Pandukeshwara nine miles beyond Joshimath has two Temples and a beautifully carved image of "Yogdhyani Badri." One of the temples seems to be older than the other. It has a cylinder tower on a cube, with flying gargoyles at the corners. There are four copper plates which refer to offerings of land to the deity by some ancient tribe. One has a bull as its seal.\*

The next 12 miles further off journey leads the traveller to the celebrated shrine at Badrikashrama. The temple claimed to have been founded by Sankaracharya. It stands on the top of the right bank of the Vishnu Ganga and thus renders itself a conspicuous object in the valley. It is built in the form of a cone, with a small cupola, surmounted by a square shelving roof of plates of copper gilded with real gold, over which is a golden ball and spear. The height of the temple is about 50 feet.

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\* In the first century A. D. we find the Kushan King. Vasudeva, exhibiting the symbols of Siva with the sacred bull, on his coins. The copper plate of Pandu-Keshwar bearing the seal of bull, may have some bearing to the period of this King?

Below the temple there is a cistern of about 30 feet square, covered with a sloping roof of dead planks and supported by wooden posts, called Tapt-Kunda. There is a warm bath supplied by a spring of hot water issuing out of the mountain. Close to it is a cold spring, which is connected with another spout, by means of which the water may be reduced to any degree of temperature between two extremes. The Deva-prayagi *Pandas* receive the gift from their *Yajmans* at this place.

The Narda Kunda is sheltered by a rock on the recess of the bank, and to the left of it is Surya-Kunda, another hot spring issuing in a very small stream through a fissure in the bank.

The image of Badrinath is about three feet high. It is made of black marble, and it stands in the centre opposite the door in a *Dhyana* posture. On the right side of this image are Udow, Nar, and Narayana, Rishis, while on the left are Cuvera and Narada the celestial treasurer and Brahmana, respectively. Luxmi is enshrined in an adjoining temple. The true place of Badri-Narayana and its religious association from a long vista of antiquity may perhaps be better understood by the legend of Nar-Narayana, the two *Rishis* described below.

It is said in the *Mahabharata* that Arjuna and **Nara-Narayana or** Shri Krishna were in one of their **Hari-Krishna** former incarnations Nara and Narayana, two *rishis* or sages who resided in Badari on the Himalayas performing severe religious penances. They were possessed of divine powers and always lived and acted together. In the *Vana-parvan* it is stated by Siva that Nara and Narayana

were the most supreme among men and that the world was being upheld by their power. The greatness of Nara and Narayana is brought out by the defeat inflicted by them on *Dambodbhava* as described in the *Udyoga-parvan*. *Dambodbhava* was once ruling as a universal sovereign and was full of conceit and pride of his own power. He learnt that on the heights of mount Gandhamadana there were two very great sages, Nara and Narayana who were invincible even to Indra. He wanted to put their greatness to test, and thus went there and challenged them to fight. They tried to avoid having to do anything with him by telling him that they had bidden farewell to all earthly passion and were living in an atmosphere of spiritual peace. This answer did not satisfy *Dambodbhava*; he still insisted on their accepting his challenge. Then Narayana took a handful of grass and threw it against *Dambodbhava*, which rendered him at once weak and powerless. Narayana afterwards admonished him for his haughtiness and advised him to be humble in the future and to lead a righteous life. Many such stories are told of them. They probably represent the inseparable association of love between the individual soul and the Supreme Soul, that is, between man and God. In the *Bhishma-parvan*, Narayana is praised as the Purusha, but is represented as something unknown. This Being is celebrated by Visvakarman as the highest Joy, as the highest Power, as the highest Truth. In the *Santiparvan*, Nara and Narayana are concretely described as "the most excellent rishis performing penance and of surpassing splendour, bearing the *srivatsa* mark, wearing a circle of matted hair, web-footed and webarmed, with

the mark of the Chakra on their feet, broad chested, long-armed, with sixty teeth and eight grinders, with voices sonorous as the clouds, with beautiful countenance, broad forehead, handsome brows, chin and nose and beheld by Narada."

The manner in which the images of Nara and Narayana are to be made is given in the Vishnu-dharmottara. It is stated therein that the image of Nara should be of grass colour and be possessed of two heads; it should be made to look powerful. Narayana should possess four arms and be of blue complexion. Both of them should be seated under a *badara* tree. They should be clad in *krishnajina* ( deer-skin ) and wear the *jata-mandalas*. Or, they might be seated in a chariot having eight wheels, with their legs crossed. (Iconography India, by Mr. Row)

The architecture of the temple is rather modern, as it seems to have undergone a good deal of repairs without any particular regard to history,—the gateways and walls being of the later Mogul style. The flowers of Badrinath are not of such an alpine nature and varied as at Kedarnath. Nevertheless they consist of wild thyme, pink and white briar roses, and many tinted violet primulas. Their hue and diffused fragrance and the glaciers and snows close at hand, offer a high degree of pleasure to the mind.

The treasury of Badrinath temple is rich. Every person, who pays his homage, to the deity makes some offerings proportionate to his means. The gift is included under three heads, for each of which a salver is allotted. The first is called "the Bhent" offerings to the image. The second is "the Bhog." It comprises the privy purse, the amount



being appropriated to the expense of his ward, robe and table. The third is for the Rawal. These presents, however, are voluntary, and many persons assume the garb of poverty to avoid a contribution commensurate with their means while others lay the whole of their property at the feet of Narayana, and trust to charity for returning home.

In addition to the places mentioned above, there are many other temples in Garhwal noted for sanctity from ages long gone by. For instance, Barahat in State Garhwal, Ad-Badri in Chandpure, Kalpeshwara in Painkhanda and Rudranath in Nagpur, all have an ancient history of religious importance. The object of various Hindu reformers in promulgating their modified cults in places, where abundant traces of a world still old are present, seems to have been to link their mode of reforms with the preceeding phases of Hinduism, with a view to insuring their acceptance. The foregoing passages will supply evidence to this effect.

Taking only the Shankarite and Rama-nuja temples into consideration, we find the former claiming, without a shadow of doubt, an age of thirteen centuries, while the latter of ten centuries, since their respective establishment. But the type of monuments and emblems still existing in those sites show their sacred nature even from a very remote period. Shankara-Charya established his temples where Buddhist Chaityas were most predominant ; and so too did Ramanuja, who possessed the Alkananda Valley as his chosen seat.

Similarly when Buddhist religion spread in Garhwal at about the beginning of the Christian Era,

it did not supersede the coarse superstitions of the people, but was engrafted into them. Generally the aborigines professed Buddhism. They retained their gods and goddesses such as Siva and Durga for whom they had the highest veneration. Perhaps the cube, the octagon, the cylinder, and the thimble shaped Siva, at Agastyamuni and at Gopeshwara, and Ardhanari Siva and nine forms of Durga found at Bhaitoo, KedarNath and Joshimuth, were the common emblems of worship in Garhwal prior to the spread of Buddhism. It is worth noting that there are more Saivite emblems in Garhwal than the rival Vaishnavite ones. This is accounted for, by the fact that the Alkananda and Mandakini Valleys seem to have been inhabited for centuries mostly by powerful tribes of aborigines. The Aryan settlers among them were friendly colonists, and not conquerors. The Van-Asur and Krishna legend referred to elsewhere, will uphold our hypothesis. The original faith of these aborigines appears to have been a form of Demonolatry. Rāmāyanā represents instances in which Rāvan and his son Megha Nad resorted to Himāvanta to worship Mahādeva to become invincible in the conflict that was raging between them and Rāma and Luchhmana. This fact naturally points out that different forms of aboriginal idolatry were prevalent among the primitive peoples of Garhwal even at that period.

Eminent English authors such as Messrs. Lassen and Stevenson, conjecture that the Phallic emblem might have been at first an object of veneration among the aborigines and that it was subsequently adopted by the Aryans who associated it with the worship of Vishnu and Rudra." In Garhwal

this seems to have been the case, as we find no traces of real Buddhist images, save the Chaityas changed into Saiva and Vishnava temples.

Again the genesis of the emblems of Daksha at Hardwar, Ram Chandra at Devaprayaga, nine planets at Agastyamuni and of Satyanarayana at Kedar-nath, may prove that they are more ancient than the Saivite symbols referred to above. Such might not however have been the case. But most likely they had a simultaneous origin. Garhwal is immensely rich in sculptures which have a long vista of antiquity. Some symbols such as chakrā and mask appear to point back to a time when the Devās and Dānavas churned the ocean for nectar. Scriptural history reveals that the Central Himalayas have long been marked with the outburst of higher religious activities. Careful study of the symbols found in Garhwal may lead to the discovery of the traces of the birth and the order in which various forms of image worship were introduced in the Hindu religion.

## **CHAPTER VIII**

### **RULERS OF GARHWAL.**

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Though Himavanta (the Central Himalayas or modern Garhwal) is situated quite in a corner of Bharta Varsha, nevertheless this region on account of the wonderful features of the country and its relation to the religious history of India, was the object of great admiration on the part of the Aryan people from the very early period of their immigration into the Punjab. Hence the Rigveda, Ramayana, Mahabharata and other Puranas, all to a certain extent teem all through with fragments of historical events relating to these tracts. They also furnish us with valuable hints in adjusting the fragments which enable us to trace the political history of the country from a very early period.

In the Rig Vedic period, when the Aryans were still in the Punjab beyond the Sutluj, it is stated that they were divided into five principal tribes, taking their names from their respective chiefs, viz, Tritsu, Puru, Anu, Yadu and Travasu. These tribes occupied the countries mentioned below. On the north of the Prusni (Ravi) river, occupying almost the whole of the northern Punjab, lay the land of the Purus who were also called the Bharatas. On the south of Satudri (Satluj) extending to the north as far as the Himalayas was

the country of the Tritsus. Adjacent to the Tritsus country and to its south and south-east lay the lands of the Travasus and the Yadus, which extended to the banks of the Jamuna. On the western bank of the Indus was the country of the Anus. From the above description of the Tritsus it is quite clear that their lands lay between the Jamuna and the Sutluj extending to the north up to the Gangotri range of the Himalayas. "Deva Das the first great king of the Tritsus", we are told, "was engaged in a continuous warfare with some tribe of the north, ruled by a chieftain of the name of Sambhara, who appears to have built a number of forts in defence of the many passages which led from the highlands into steeper and wilder Himalayan fastnesses". From this account we are led to surmise, that Sambhara was a chieftain of the aborigines in Garhwal, as this was the tract which lay north-east of the Sutluj and Jamuna, and which possessed numerous forts on its hill tops, and had many passages leading from the highlands into steeper fastnesses. There is no doubt, that the Tritsus' Aryan dominions extended as far as the Gangotri range of hills on the north, and they were in close proximity to Garhwal. Not contented with their dominions, they must have been fighting with the primitive peoples of Garhwal, in order to extend their territory. Another proof which supports this view is, that in course of time when the Purus or the Bhartas had extended their country eastwards they changed their designation to the Kurus (which occurs in the Mahabharata), but in that Epic the word "Tritsus" is nowhere mentioned. Most probably after they had become masters of the

Central Himalayan range they too, like the Kurus passed for Panchalas. The Panchalas and Kurus both sprang up from one tribe of Aryans, the former being born of the family of Dusmanta and possessed a kingdom of great prowess (Mahabharat Adi Parva). Thus after subjugating the Dravidian Kingdom of central Himavanta, the Tritsus founded their kingdom by the name of Panchala. This subjugation took place, most probably sometime at the end of the Vedic period which, is defined by some writers to be about 2500 B. C. How far it is correct we cannot say. However, it appears that the Aryans moved on the bank of the Jamuna and the Ganges, and it is likely that at this period they began to march along the foot-hills, under the towering walls of the Garhwal Himalayas, and colonised the southern part of it.

We now pass on to the Epic period. From the Mahabharata Adi Parva, we learn that the Panchalas ruled over this country for several centuries. But sometimes before the great Kurukshetra war, the Panchalas were for some reasons divided into two parts, the Northern and the Southern. The former was above the Ganges, and the latter between the Ganges and the Jamuna. The former portion was conquered by Dronacharya from king Drupada and was annexed to the Kourava kingdom. The latter remained under Drupada whose territories extended as far as the Chambal. The capital of the former was Ahichhatra, which Professor Rapson in his book "Ancient India" identifies with a ruined site still bearing the same name near the village of Ramnagar. Our readers will bear in

mind that the northern portion of Panchala comprised the greater portion of what is now known as State Garhwal, and the whole of British Garhwal and Kumaon, henceforward became the land of the ancient Kurus.

The Kurus continued to exercise supreme power over this tract of land until the division of the kingdom between the Kauravas and the Pandavas took place. It appears that Garhwal came under the sway of the Pandavas, as we find it mentioned in the *Mahabharata Sabha Parva* that at the time of Yudhishthira's Imperial Sacrifice (which was performed on the partition of the kingdom), the people of Tangana and Paritangana brought their presents in the shape of gold dust and sheep wool blankets "Kambals". We have already stated elsewhere that the ancient population of Garhwal consisted of the Kiratas and the Tanganas etc, who occupied the tract of land situated on the upper course of the Ganges in Garhwal and Kumaun.

Ptolemy points out that, "from the Jamuna to the Sarda in Kumaun, the country was inhabited by Kiratas and was called Tangnoi Sub-Division."

Soon after the Rajasuya-Yajna of king Yudhishthira, the Pandavas lost their kingdom in gambling, and were exiled for thirteen years, when these regions again changed hands and became subject to the Kauravas, till the great Karukshetra war. It is described before that in this war Bhag Datta led a huge army consisting mostly of Kiratas and Chinas under his command as an ally of the Kurus. From this it will be readily inferred that during this period Bhag Datta

must have been a feudatory ruler of these parts under Dhritrashtra's Suzerainty. The date of the Kurukshetra war is fixed by various scholars from 1600 B. C. to 1200 B. C., in which the Kauravas were completely exterminated, while their sceptre passed into the hands of the victorious Pandavas, who again began to rule over it till their retirement to Kailash, when Parikshit their grandson, at the age of sixteen years was placed on the throne. How long the Pandava dynasty ruled over Garhwal can not now be ascertained correctly.

The Vishnu Purana says, that from the birth of Parikshit to the coronation of Nanda in 370 B. C. some 1015 years must have elapsed. The history of this period concerning Garhwal is blank. The great political fact of this new epoch, is that the whole of northern India was for the first time united into one great Empire by the genius of Chandargupta, whilst simultaneously a new religion, Buddhism, was making progress among the humble and the lowly, though at first it was confined to Magadha and the adjacent states. We are doubtful, whether Garhwal at the time of Chandargupta was within his Empire. If not, then in 260 B.C. when his grandson Asoka, a monarch of world-wide reputation, who exerted such an influence on the history of the world through his zeal for righteousness and virtue, as no succeeding Indian monarch did, ascended the throne, the Maurya Empire extended all over India; and Himavanta or Garhwal was not outside its fold. His rock edict on the Jamuna river still stands in evidence of his suzerainty over the Himalayan region. Buddhism



also appears to have been propagated in these parts, as we have stated before, during his reign.

Prior to the Maurya dynasty's accession to power in Northern India, the Greeks were holding some portion of the N. W. borders of India, and some of them, it is stated, extended their conquests into the heart of Northern India, but they founded no kingdom here. However, we are made to surmise that these Yavanas penetrated to Garhwal, not as rulers, but probably as astronomers and sculptors, as we find some exquisitely carved images of gods in the Greek style in our temples, at Pandukeshwar and Joshimuth. (Arch. Survey India, Antiquity N. W. P. Volume 2). In addition to these images we have come across with other beautifully carved small life-size image of Dhyani Budha at Tunganath which the people call Sankara-Charya's image, but it seems to be the work of Grecian sculptors.

Gargacharya in his Samhita says that the Yavanas were good astronomers, and consequently they were honoured by the Hindus as "Rishis". Astronomy seems to have reached a high pitch of perfection in Garhwal in the 2nd century B. - C. and both Parasara and Gargacharya were considered to have been the most ancient of the astronomers who lived here. The latter is said to have acquired a knowledge of divination, on the bank of the Saraswati, according to some writers, or on the bank of the Gargi in Dronagiri according to others. So that, it is probable, that the learned Yavanas might have sought the counsel of Gargacharya and other astronomers in this country to make progress in that science.

About the year 126 B.C. a Scythian tribe, called the Sakas by the Hindus, poured down through the Himalayan passes. Their most famous king, Kanishka, held his court in Kashmere, although his suzerainty extended from Kabul to Agra in the South, and to Yarkánda and Kohkand on the north of the Himalayas. It is presumable that Garhwal was included within this Scythian empire. Some writers hold, that the Khasyas who form the bulk of the Rajput population in Garhwal have among them people of Scythian origin. The *Mahabharata Bhishmaparva* Ch. IX, includes Yavanas amongst the barbarian tribes of Northern India. Combining the testimony of the *Mahabharata* with that of modern historians, we may infer that some of the Yavanas may have rushed through the Central Himalayan passages, or emigrated from the Punjab and settled in this country some time between 130 B. C. and 425 A. D. The *Sálivahanà Sakabda* (era) was established from 78 A. D. most probably when King Kanishka was crowned. Though this era is not current in these parts, yet it is respected as much as the "Sambat" of Vikramaditya, and is to be found quoted in the annual calendar (*patra*), horoscopes and similar other Brahamanical documents. It is a strong proof, that whosoever might have held the chieftainship of Garhwal during this period, they must have been the vassals of the Emperor Kanishka, otherwise this era would not have come into vogue in Garhwal.

So far we have been treading more or less on firm ground; now we have to attempt to trace out the rulers of this country from the beginning of

the Christian era. In the beginning of the 4th century A.D. the Gupta dynasty rose in power in Gujrat. Samudragupta distinguished himself by conquering almost the whole of India, as we learn from his inscription on the Allahabad *lît* of Asoka that "he conquered Kanchi, Kerata and other countries in Southern India, exterminated the kings of Aryavarta or Northern India, the frontier kings of Samtata (East Bengal), Kamrupa (Assam), Nepal and other places. Nations like the Malvas, Madarakas, and Abhiras yielded to his power, and paid him tribute. Even the Shahs and Shahinshahs of western countries, and the people of Ceylon sent him tributes in offerings and gifts and handsome maidens from their lands." From this it is quite evident, that though neither Central Himavanta nor the tribes then inhabiting there are mentioned in the inscription, nevertheless a small tract such as Central Himavanta, close to Nepal could never have been independent of his sway.

In the 6th century A.D. Yashodharman of Malva known to us as Vikramaditya the Great, was the master of northern India from the Brahmaputra to the Western ocean. His era is contemporaneous with the era of the Malva tribe, *i. e.*, 57 -B. C. Malva was raised by Vikramaditya to the rank of the first nation in India. India was freed by him from foreign invasions from the West for five centuries, after the defeat and expulsion of the Huns. His era being the latest in India is used all over the country. This *Vikrami Sambat* is supposed to have been especially founded for reckoning the system of historical dates. The nine gems of the court of Vikram are well known to every Garhwali.

There is no doubt then, that Garhwal enjoyed the shade of his Regal umbrella as well.

During the reign of Siladitya, in the 6th century, a Chinese traveller of the name of Hieun Tsang travelled over a great portion of India, and recorded a description of India and the Indians, thus furnishing a link between the ancient and modern India. Unfortunately he left very few notes concerning the Himalayas and the Sub-Himalayan region. In his Sub-Himalayan travel he speaks of a kingdom Barhampura, which General Cunningham has identified with Barahat (Vol. XI. Gaz. P. 512) now a village in Patti Rawain in State Garhwal which, says the Chinese traveller, "produced gold and where for ages a woman has been the ruler and so it is called the kingdom of a woman. The husband of the reigning woman is called king, but he knows nothing of affairs of the state. This man manages the wars and sows the land." Hieun Tsang's description of the South Western Garhwal gives us some indication of the sociology then prevalent in those parts, which shows that woman was the obvious head and governor of the whole tract and even in other social customs must have possessed the highest power of organization and efficiency. This Barahat seems to have been a place of great celebrity from the very beginning of the Epic period. Skandha Purana K. Khand Chapter 93, identifies Barahat with Varnavata, where, when Yudhishtira was appointed heir-apparent, Duryodhana formed a nefarious scheme for killing all the five sons of King Pandu. He (Yudhishtira) with his brothers and mother was induced to pay a visit to Varnavata, where a house of

las and other inflammable materials had been built for their residence. Hieun Tsang only dealt with the South Western Garhwal kingdom.

But from the Archaeological Survey of India Vol. II, we learn that two ancient cities were explored in lower Garhwal by General Cunningham. One called Mordhwaj was situated midway on Kotdwara Najibabad road. The other a place now known as Panduwala in Ganga Salān, was six miles east of Hardwar which seems to be contemporaneous with Barhampura. The description of each as given by the archaeological officers in the "Monumental Antiquities and Inscriptions in N.W.P. Vol II", will perhaps be of interest to our readers.

"Mordhaj, also called Munawara Tur, is a ruined fort. Its ramparts, which have still a height of about 15 feet above the surrounding country, enclose an oblong space of 800 by 625 feet. The entrance is on the eastern side, and is still covered by the remains of an outwork. The ditch 60 feet broad by 3 feet in length is surrounded at a distance of about 120 feet from the main rampart by an outer rampart. Portions of the brick walls were still to be traced when General Cunningham visited the place in 1863, but all these remains are fast disappearing. The bricks are of large size, being  $13\frac{1}{2}" \times 8\frac{1}{2}" \times 2\frac{1}{2}"$ . Near the middle of the east side there is a lofty mound called Shigri, a name which is called to be a contraction of Shergarhi, tiger's house or Sri Garhi, but this etymology is apparently of later date. The Shigri mound has a height of 35 feet above the interior level, and of 43 feet above the plain, and has a circumference of 308 feet. A close examination shows

that the outer portion of the mound is composed of brick rubbish, the remains of some large superstructure. The size and importance of this building, originally no doubt a large Buddhist Chaitya, with the usual series of umbrella-like discs composing its lofty spire, and in later days probably a Brahamanical temple, may be guessed from the fact that the entire surface of the mound had a depth of from 3 to 8 feet with many square yards of plain surface around its base together with a similar depth covered with broken brick *debris*. The people state, that within the memory of living men there were still portions of the superstructure standing on the mound, but that the materials were utilised in the construction on repair of bridges on the Najibabad Kotdwara road, which skirts the base of the old fort at a distance of about 400 yards”.

“From the solid appearance of the mound General Cunningham considered it to be the ruins of an old Buddhist Stûpa which supposition was subsequently confirmed by Mr. Markham’s exploration of the mound in February 1887. Two large circular terracotta medals, and about two dozen smaller clay seals, impressed with the figure of Buddha seated within a handsome Chaitya, with the Buddhist creed formula in characters of the 8th century below, and at least one thousand small Buddhist votive tablets of baked clay stamped with the figure of Buddha the Ascetic, were excavated from the relic chamber, and presented to the Lucknow Museum. During the excavation of the mound, Mr. Markham succeeded in disclosing the usual procession path surrounding the Stupa. There was, however, no trace of any railing, nor were any

pieces of rails found. From the *debris* of an old well close to the mound, several terra cotta figures, fragments of stone statues, and portion of a door-lintel were brought to light."

"According to the people, Mordhaj formerly abounded in stones of all kinds and sizes wrought and unwrought, but the whole have been carried away to Pathargarh. The stone figures of gods and goddesses are said to have supplied all the temples at Najibabad".

The above description of the Buddhist Chaitya Stupa and the almost uninterrupted traces of ancient ruins extending to a distance of several square miles, convey to us a conception that the place must have been the site of a large and wealthy city, and that the inhabitants were wealthy, powerful and progressive. The ruler of Mordhaj must have held a large tract of country under his subjugation and the greater portion of lower Garhwal most probably was included in this kingdom. The name Mordhaj is derived from Mayurdhwaja, or the "peacock standard" which may be the title of its founder, whom tradition shows to be a contemporary of the Pandavas. But a genealogy is also given which makes him the Jain antagonist of Sayad Sâlar-i-Masnad Ghazi, and if this be accepted, the date of Mayurdhwaja's fort can not be fixed earlier than the beginning of the 10th century.

The ruins of this ancient city are still to be found near Mandhal, a ruined village in Parganna Ganga Salân, which "possesses a very remarkable old temple

**Panduwalla.**

admirably preserved. The temple itself stands on a platform 20 feet square, and at each side is a trench. Beautifully executed heads terminate the trench at the four corners:—on the south a woman's head and bust, on the west a lion, and on the north a ram, the east corner being broken and defaced. A number of carved slabs, large shafts of pillars and friezes and doorways are scattered through the neighbouring jungle."

Barahat, Mordhaj, and Panduwala, all situated on the south of Garhwal, seem to have once been the seats of Garhwal chieftains. The ruins themselves indicate that the cities were very populous and wealthy. Unfortunately there is no coin, inscription or written record of these places left to trace as to who these people were and what led to their decline. A mysterious cloud hangs over them. Modern historians point out that the latter two cities had probably been sacked by the ruthless Timur in his way to Har-dwar. Delhi fell under several such acts of pillage, but regained her strength, whereas these poorer places were ruined for ever. There may be one more reason to elucidate the complete destruction of these ancient cities, *viz* :—

In the 8th or 9th century A. D. some of the dynasties of the various Rajput clans, who were scarcely considered within the pale of the Aryan Hindus before, stepped forward from their kingdoms into the Deccan, and by their might and bravery created room for themselves on the empty throne of various places, such as Ajmere, Delhi, Kanauj, Lahore and other places, while the junior members of these ruling families issued out of their former



kingdoms, and went to out of the way places in quest of kingdoms for themselves. History points out that from Nepal to Kangra, almost all the hill states are governed now-a-days by the scions of princes from the Deccan. During this very period a change in the state of their religion also took place. These Rajputs with their might and by the help of the Brahamanas firmly established the Puranic religion which is in favour of personal gods and image worship.

The dynasty we are now entering upon to describe probably falls in the above mentioned category. In *Sambat* 756 Raja Kanakpal of the reigning Chand family of Malva, arrived in Garhwal. As the tradition goes, Raja Kanakpal on his arrival here was adopted as successor to a Raja named Sonpal who gave his daughter, and sole heir, in marriage to Kanakpal. (Sonpal is said to have ruled over the western portion of modern upper Garhwal. Bhilang now a portion of State Garhwal was his capital. Nothing certain is known of Sonpal's dynasty. It appears that it was supplanted by the Kanakpal family, and may have been one of the many chieftains of Garhwal). We are now entering upon a period when the political conditions of this country resembled exactly like that which prevailed in England from the sixth century after Christ. As in England, Northumbria ruled all the north of England, Mercia the Midlands and Wessex all the southern parts of England, similarly Sonpal and Katyuris were the overlords of the petty states in the north of Garhwal. Kanakpal settled himself in the midlands. Whereas Mordhwaj,

**Panduwala, and Barhampura Chiefs** ruled over the Southern Garhwal. Such a state lasted in England for a century or so, but in Garhwal it seems to have been continued for full six centuries, after which all the petty principalities came to be merged into the Kanakpal dynasty which wielded the supreme monarchical power over whole of the Garhwal. We shall now briefly narrate the history of this dynasty, which settled on a lofty and steep mountain range in Chandpur covered with thick forests and abounding in fine scenery. The spot he chose for his fort was on a peak close to the bend of a stream flowing some 500 feet below it. The walls of the fort and the ruins of the dwelling houses are still extant. "The walls must have been very strongly built as they are formed of large slabs of cut stones, the space covered by them being one and a half acres. There are also two flight of steps, each formed of one solid block of stone, which is said to have been quarried in Duda-ki-toli range, a march and a half distant from the fort."

Raja Kanakpal laid the firm foundation of the Garhwal Raj on such an auspicious day that its continuity has since been maintained without any device or legal fiction. The prosperity and expansion of the Raj, in fact yearly increased. The present Raja Narendra Shah is the 59th occupant of the throne. For nearly 690 years Chandpur enjoyed the honour of being the seat of the Garwal Rajas. Garhwal remained divided among several petty chieftains so long as Chandpur was the capital of the reigning dynaty. It also seems improbable that at this time their territory extended any farther than Srinagar in the South.

In the North the power of the Katyuris gradually decayed. The boundaries of their Raj contracted. In about 1200 A.D. the Vaishnavas covered the Alakananda Valley with Vaishnavite temples and made the Rajas give them rich grants of land. The Katyuris who were staunch Saivites must have opposed the doctrines of Ramanujacharya but without success, and this change might have made them quit their capital at Joshimuth, and flee to Kumaun. The Southern Satraps came to be exterminated by Timur in 1398. A. D. So that, from that period forward the Kanakpal dynasty's power began to stretch, and by the fourteenth century, under the power of Ajaipal it reached the height of its full prosperity. He changed his capital from Chandpur to Srinagar, and the residential place on a grand scale which he had commenced to build, is said to have been completed by his successors. The palace which covered some acres of land and was swept away by a flood of the Gohna Lake in 1894 A. D. along with the whole bazar and many temples of Srinagar, must have once displayed considerable architectural pretensions.

Since the flood Srinagar has been rebuilt near the centre of a wide flat vale at a distance of about a mile from the old site. There are still many older temples to be seen which, as Sisteriveditta says, are of a ponderous and severe beauty and in a type immediately preceding that of mediæval Oressa. She further remarks that "they are comparatively small, but marvellously perfect. The style must have persisted long in the Himalayas. There are examples of it, in a more developed and slender form, even here at Srinagar, as modern

as two hundred years old, but the earliest examples must be very old indeed, dating from the days of the Hindu Revival under the Guptas, that is to say from about A. D. 400 to or even earlier. The geographical situation in the midst of a valley that is almost a plain, forces the formation of an organic centre. We can well imagine how the first colony of Buddhist monks would gradually settle down in order that they might live their monastic life, with preaching, study, and its regular worship, contented in the main to become an organic part of the life about them. Actual traces of their occupation have all been obliterated long long ago, but whenever we find a very old religious dedication, which has been a sheet-anchor of worship for centuries after centuries. We may infer with some certainty that it was established by them. Such centres exist at Srinagar in the Temples of Kamaleshwar and of the Five Pandavas".

Now we shall again revert to Raja Ajaipal referred to above. When the country passed into Raja Ajaipal's hands, a memorable change took place. He consolidated the whole country under his sway, and extended it from the Himalayas to Chandi near Hardwar, and from the Jumuna to Badhan. He ruled the country with a strong but gentle hand for twelve years. Petty chiefs were reduced to insignificance, some by the bestowal of a few villages as Jagir, while others by the gift of land only sufficient to keep up the position. Tradition further points out that the country was in a very flourishing state during his reign. Srinagar has since risen to be the first town in modern Garhwal. We are led to surmise that the

transformation in the name of the country from "Kedarbhumi and Badrikashrama" to Garhpal took place in the time of Raja Ajaipal.

Raja Ajaipal was succeeded by many a powerful and brave Raja, who gradually extended their territory. In the year 1692 A.D., Raja Fateh Shah attacked both Saharanpur and Tibet and conquered them. Further the story runs that the crown, uniform, sword and gun etc., of Raja Fateh Shah are still extant in a famous temple of a town named Dava in Tibet. How far the story is correct we can not say.

The change from Pal to Shah in the title of the Garhwal Rajas after the death of Raja Sahajpal (1465 A.D.) is rather remarkable. We have made a searching enquiry into the subject but found no satisfactory solution. However, tradition states (a) that when Aurangzeb defeated his brothers Shuja and Dara, the latter is said to have taken refuge in Srinagar Garhwal, but he was betrayed and sent back to Delhi. It is said that, in recognition of that service the Raja of Garhwal received the title of Shah (hereditary). This appears to be incredible, as Aurangzeb ascended the Imperial throne in 1658, whereas Balbhadra Shah (the first Raja bearing that title) succeeded to the Garhwal Raj in the 15th century A.D.

(b) A Bartwal from village Satéra in Talla Nagpur is said to have been sent to Delhi on some state affair. During his stay there, one of the female members of the royal seraglio was dangerously ill. The messenger of Garhwal implored to be allow-

ed to diagnose her suffering through a thread tied to the wrist of the patient. On his success, he asked for the title of Shah for his Raja instead of the reward intended for him. How far the above traditions are credible we leave it to our readers to determine. For our part we presume, that some important event must have happened to bring about this change between the Imperial Government at Delhi and the Garhwal Rajas. The title of Shah continues to this day.

Tradition ascribes that there has been war for generations between Garhwal and Kumaun Rajas. In 1597 and 1621 A.D. Kumaun Rajas encroached upon Garhwal territory, but on both occasions Garhwalis defeated and repulsed them back. Again history represents that in the year 1709 Raja Jagat Chand of Kumaun invaded Garhwal and captured Srinagar the capital of Garhwal, but the Garhwalis fought hard and forced Raja Jagat Chand to retreat back with great loss. Towards the middle of the seventeenth century we find the Raja of Garhwal annexing Kumaun as far as to Almora within the realm of Garhwal, and it cannot be said for certain how long it was held by the Garhwal Rajas.

Before proceeding to describe the further history of Garhwal, we consider it appropriate here to make some mention of the people of a new faith or creed who were making their way in Northern India from A.D. 1000. These were the Mahomedans, with whom violence was virtue, slaughter a religious

act, and death in battle a passport to heaven. They moreover breathed fire and slaughter against the idolators. Such a race was seeking to establish its power on all sides in Northern India. The Hindus were terrified and thought that their religion would be swept away by the tide of Mahomedan conquest. A great number of the aborigines, in fact, became converts to Islam.

Garhwal the home of Rishis and spiritual men must have been in great terror at that time, but fortunately she had all along remained untouched by the Mahomedan invasions. In 1398 A.D. Timur at the head of the united Tartars entered Delhi, the capital of India, defeated king Mahmud and ordered a general massacre for five days. Some streets were rendered impassable by heaps of dead bodies, while Timur calmly looked on and held a feast in honour of his victory. On the last day of 1398 he resumed his march, first offering a sincere and humble tribute of grateful praise to God (Allah). On the sixth day he crossed the Ganges and proceeded to Meerut, where also the same indiscriminate massacre must have taken place. Thence he turned to the foot of the Himalayas, sacking most probably Mordhaj and Panduwala which places he met on his way to Hardwar. Then he retreated to Central Asia in (1399) with thousands of Indian slaves and incalculable booty.

When the Mughal dynasty had usurped the throne of Delhi, Akbar the Great, who belonged to Timur's dynasty, and was eighth in succession to him, was the first who consolidated the Mahomedan kingdom and laid firm foundation of Mahomedan

rule in Northern India. He expanded his father's small kingdom into an Empire, extending from the heart of Afghanistan across the whole of India north of the Vindhya mountains, to Oressa in the east. Akbar's policy of administration was national rather than sectarian. He showed equal sympathy with the speculations of all religions, and had an admiration for the Hindu system of administration, with a desire only to complete and extend it. He had a love for every thing that was national, with the habit of striking swiftly and pardoning generously. On account of these qualities, he was all along loved by his subjects. He enlisted the sympathy of the Rajput prince by marriage and other generous acts. Such was the Mahomedan Emperor, under whose political suzerainty all Northern India stooped.

Neither history nor tradition ascribes to the Mahomedans the power to effect the conquest of these hills, although "some of the tombs, discovered in Kumaun, at Bageshwar and at Dwarahat differed both in form and appearance from the graves (Samadhis) of *Jogis the only class of Hindus which adopt sepulchres*. This led Mr. Traill, to believe that some of them were of Tartars or Mahomedans", Nevertheless in Garhwal even such faint traces of Mahomedan immigration have not yet been discovered, with the exception of some old Garhwal State coins, *viz.*, Timasis, some of which bear the name of Shah Alam and others of Nadir Shah. Local tradition, however, has it that a certain amount of *Sirti* or tribute was assessed upon the Garhwal Raj to be paid to the Imperial



**Government at Delhi.** But, it is said, that on the unproductive and rugged nature of the country being explained, the tribute was remitted. We, therefore, infer that Garhwal formed a nominal feudatory dependency of the Mughal Empire at Delhi, until the fall of that dynasty (1771 A. D.)

Some of the Garhwal songs (Bhadelas) reveal that parties of Rohillas penetrated into Southern Garhwal and cruelly lorded it over the peasantry. These marauding Rohillas must have been detached parties of those who in 1772 A.D. seized and kept hold over a tract on the North Western Frontier of Oudh, and were reduced by the Nawab Vazier of Oudh with the help of the British Government. According to an extant copper plate, we have also come to know that some of these parties were crushed by the Garhwalis themselves, and thereafter they ceased to harass the Garhwal peasantry.

In the same year the kingdom of Raja Kaliyan Chand of Kumaun was badly shaken for a time, by the Rohillas and he was obliged to flee from Kumaun and took refuge with the Raja of Garhwal at Srinagar, who shewed him due courtesy, friendship and great sympathy. And the Raja of Garhwal paid him three lacs of rupees to get himself released from the revages wrought by the Rohillas and make himself once more free, peaceful, and prosperous.

Now to advert to the Garhwal Rajas in Srinagar again. The last Raja who held his court in Srinagar was Raja Pradyuman Shah. His father Raja Lalit Shah had four sons named Jaikrit Shah, Pradyuman Shah, Prakram Shah, and Pritam Shah.

Raja Lalit Shah had resolved in his mind to place each of his sons on four different thrones. The eldest Jaikrit Shah was the heir apparent to the throne of Garhwal. The second prince Pradyuman Shah was placed on the throne of Kumaun which Lalit Shah had conquered. Soon after this Lalit Shah died and was succeeded by Jaikrit Shah. He too after a short interval was gathered to his forefathers. Raja Pradyuman Shah of Kumaun, seeing his father's throne at Srinagar vacant, handed over the Kumaun Raj to his younger brother Prakram Shah and returned to Garhwal. It is, however, remarkable to note, how Raja Lalit Shah realised his purpose. Ever since Raja Pradyuman Shah ascended the *Gaddi* of Garhwal, various misfortunes had always been befalling him. In the early part of his reign his capital was inundated by a flood of the Alaknanda which swept away at least one third of the town, causing considerable damage to the palace buildings. In the year 1791 A. D. a hill tribe, dissimilar in many respects to the Garhwalis, appeared on the Southern border of the country. It came from Nepal, and professed a mixed religion of Hinduism, and Buddhism. Rivers of considerable volume, dense forests infested with furious wild animals, steep and pathless hills, were no impediments to the lust of gain and conquest, which actuated the brave Goorkhalis at the close of the 18th century A.D. to invade Garhwal. They advanced as far as Langurgarh a place situated on the crest of a high hill and precipitous ridge which separates the Koh Valley from the Nayar river. About six thousand

Garhwali troops were concentrated here, and they made a vigorous defence of their country. The invading Goorkhas concentrated their whole efforts on reducing it for a whole year, but failed. In the middle of their arrangements for a more determined attack on the fort, news arrived that the Chinese had invaded the Goorkhalis possession, and that all the troops should return to Nepal.

"The Goorkhali leader" says Batten, "however, so impressed Raja Pradyuman Shah with a sense of their power, that he agreed to pay a yearly tribute of Rs. 25,000 to the Nepalese Government and sent an Agent to the Durbar which for the next 12 years prescribed some appearance of amity between the two Governments.

Raja Pradyuman Shah after becoming tributary to the Nepalese Government was relieved of the anxieties and troubles he had been involved in for a full year. He thought of no more danger from his rivals, and began to lead a quiet and happy life in Srinagar without the faintest idea of the enemy's revengeful nature, and arrogant and selfconceited characteristics. He paid no more attention to the improvement, and increase of his troops, or to their accoutrements, or to the strengthening of his country for its future defence. There is a local saying "Honhār hirdaye base bhuljāe subsud" i.e. a man forgets all except what is going to happen. For some years the Garhwal State business appears to have gone on smoothly, but Raja Pradyuman Shah's stars again fell from the Zenith, and indications of a fresh calamity appeared. In the beginning

of the year 1803 A.D. a severe shock of earthquake passed over the whole of Garhwal which, destroyed many homes and killed many human beings and cattle. "The town of Srinagar was nearly destroyed", when Mr. Raper visited it in 1808. "Not above one home in five was inhabited, the rest being heaps of ruins". Mr. Batten writes :—"the Raja's palace was rendered inhabitable. Frequent shocks took place for several months. It is said that many streams had run dry, whilst new springs appeared in other places."

Soon after this event, news of the Goorkhalis, advance towards Garhwal spread all over the country. Raja Paradyuman Shah was absolutely under the influence of a strong Brahmanical clique which was powerful not only in matters of religious import, but also in many other matters. They even controlled all the relations of life, both individual and collective. "Pradyuman Shah who was mild and effeminate to a degree, did not grasp the nature of the danger to which he was exposed, and portents had already paralysed his superstitious mind. The, priests at Jamanotri had foretold the Goorkhalis conquest and the death of Pradyuman Shah at Dehra " (Batten). We shall pause here and pass on to the Goorkha invasion of Garhwal in 1803 A. D.

It would be appropriate here to give a brief definition of the word 'Goorkha' before describing their second invasion. Dr. Oldfield writes in his history of Nepal thus :—"It is stated, that on the Mahomedan invasion of Rajputana in the 12th century A. D. several branches of the reigning family

of that country, preferring exile to slavery, dispersed themselves over Hindustan. One branch from Udaipur from which the present dynasty of Nepal is descended, migrated towards the Himalayas and settled in the lower range of hills, constituting the country of Palpa. From Palpa they advanced on to the adjacent hills, and ultimately gained the possession of the kingdom of Goorkha, over the whole of which they fairly established their authority. They derived their national name of Goorkhas from its capital city." Not content with the original limits of the hill states of Goorkha, they gradually encroached upon the lands of neighbouring Rajas. For six or seven centuries they had been engaged in consolidating their power in Nepal. From Raja Pirthi Narain's time (1769) their feeling towards foreign conquest revived. In the year 1791, after conquering Doti and Kumaun, they advanced as far as Garhwal, but retreated to Nepal as already stated above.

We learn from the Nepalese history that from 1792 onwards, internal feuds had been springing up in the Nepalese Durbar, in consequence of which the Nepalese army was restrained from re-invading Garhwal. But the resistance they had received from the Garhwali troops in their first attempt of which they bore a deep impression, led the Goorkhas to make another attempt on Garhwal. It might also be natural for men of the type of the Goorkhas to be actuated to do so. On account of their greed for land which they might have regarded as a virtue; and they proposed to set out again with a determination to bring Garhwal under their sway. After the death of Raja

**Ran Bahadur** the fueds in Nepal were over, and **Amar Singh Thapa**, son of **Bhim Singh Thapa** the then prime minister of Nepal, was appointed General in command of the large army which set out to invade Garhwal. They were armed with sabre, khukri, English pattern matchlocks of their own manufacture, and with bows and arrows in addition. The officers carried sword, shield and khukri. All the officers and men were dexterous in the use of those weapons. The army consisted of disciplined men, well accustomed to active service,—thanks to constant warfares in Nepal. The soldiers were really veterans under the control of such able and skilful commanders as **Amar Singh Thapa**, **Hastidhal Chowtaria**, **Bamsah Chowtaria** and **Bansbakht Thapa** leaders whose entire lives had been passed in warfares.—The country they were going to invade was well reconnoitred and they were therefore well acquainted with the local conditions. We have thus so far seen the superiority of their officers and fighting men in every respect over the Garhwalis.

“The die was cast now, and the Goorkhas advanced with great ferocity in three columns from Kumaun. The Garhwalis who were by this time partly subdued but not quite broken in spirit were roused by the encroachment of the enemy, and met their hostile approaches half way” (Fraser). The same author mentions that the total number of Garhwali regualr troops consisted of about 5000 men, of whom 1000 were located at Srinagar, and the rest were distributed over various pargannas. The army had no uniformity in dress or discipline. Their pay was seldom regularly distributed. Some of them were armed with matchlocks, bows, arrows.

swords and shields, others used to carry only a sword and a shield, as these were the established and favourite weapons of the country. Though the Garhwali troops were not accustomed to warfare, yet they consisted of men who were of a martial nature, which is evident from the efforts they made in the previous war at Langur Garh, and specially the people of Lohba who kept the Goorkhalis out of Garhwal for twelve years after they had obtained the possession of Kumaun.

Had Pradyuman Shah thought of it before, and wished to increase his army, or to improve their discipline, weapons, and military skill for the coming duel, they would most probably have offered the same resistance to the Goorkhas, as they did twelve years before ; for the country itself was a natural fort offering many facilities for encountering the enemy. Raja Pradyuman Shah himself was not in a position to command his army in time of danger. The leaders of the Garhwali troops must have been the Brahmanas and Rajputs, who were unskilled in the tactics of warfare. It is conceded on all hands that a leader can do more than his subordinates, only if he stands high in the estimation of his troops. If this be so, there is nothing they would not do for him—no danger that they would not gladly face, no hardship that they would not cheerfully undergo.—Such was not the case with the Garhwali leaders and troops. They were in every respect inferior in combat. However, the men of Lohba and the Aswals were of martial character. The former garrisoned the fort at Lohba which was situated on the summit of a high conical hill on the boundary of Kumaun and

**Garhwal.** The walls and remains of the buildings still exist to show that the fort must have been of considerable extent. It stands immediately above the right bank of the Ramgunga river, and in olden times was the scene of many a stiff fight between the rival people of Kumaun and Garhwal. The Aswals garrisoned the fort Langur-Garh.

Scarcely had the Goorkha troops approached to Srinagar, then Raja Pradyuman Shah with his family quitted Srinagar and fled via Barahat to Dehra Dun closely pursued by the victorious Goorkhas. However, the final engagement is said to have taken place in Dehra-Dun. Mr. Fraser says that the Garhwali troops on this occasion numbered about 12000 men, who after maintaining the conflict for some time dispersed. Raja Pradyuman Shah was killed in the battle, and a great number of men were slaughtered by the Goorkhas. The Raja's youngest brother Pritam Shah was taken a prisoner to Nepal, while the other, Prakaram Shah escaped to Indore.

In January 1804 A. D. the long standing Garhwali Raj of the Chand dynasty was abruptly overthrown by the Goorkhas and since then Srinagar also ceased to be the capital of the Raj. All the valuable documents and other records relating to the family history of the Garhwali Rajas, which were left in Srinagar by the deceased Raja, are said to have been destroyed by the Goorkhas, the valuables being taken to Nepal.

The Garhwalis, who for centuries past had not been accustomed to the control of foreigners, now passed under the yoke of a people whose character Dr. Daniell Wright describes thus in his history of



Nepal p. 73. "Their bearing is rude and insolent in the highest degree, in fact they seemed to think rudeness a proof of manly independence ; they are always ready to ask favours, either public or private, but when any return is expected, the less that is looked for the better. The Goorkhas are so arrogant and self conceited that, I believe, nothing will ever convince them of their inferiority, till they meet severe disaster".

The first unpleasant feeling that arose in the mind of the Garhwalis, immediately after they came under the sway of the Goorkhas, was that Sudarshan Shah the minor prince and heir-apparent to the deceased Raja Pradyuman Shah, as also the other survivors of the royal family of Garhwal were left unprovided for. Instead of conciliating the people of Garhwal by giving at least a small portion of the principality conquered back to the minor prince and fixing an allowance sufficient for the maintenance of the ex-Raja's family,—just as the British Government on its accession to power in India lavishly did in regard to all the native states of India including Garhwal.—The Goorkhas, in the words of Colonel Hugh Pears, cruelly drove out Sudrashan Shah from the "cradle of his forefathers' land":

However, the people of Garhwal were so simple that not even once in twelve years did they ever attempt to regain their country, and these matters would have been of no account to them, or they would have soon forgotten all about them, and been happy and content, had their new masters been a little interested in their newly acquired territories in the maintaining of order, and dispensing a fair

and impartial justice, which is the paramount duty of every king. In the Mahabharata Shanti Parva, to a query of Yudhishtira Bhishma stated "that the difference between a king and other people lies in the way that the former is born with the knowledge of Raj-Niti and the spirit of Vishnu (God). It is for this reason, that the world bows to a king as to a God". The Garhwalis were law abiding, religious and truthful people and regarded the will of the king as supreme, and his right to exact obedience as divine. Mr. Traill found the people of this country exactly as we have stated above. But the Goorkhas had come to Garhwal under the influence of anger, greed, lust, desire, and transgressed the Raj-Niti, thus commencing their Raj with wrong beginning, and ending it in the same way. The errors alluded to above are not imaginary or fictitious, but find actual support from the following notes which we have taken from Mr. Fraser's Memoirs.

He writes :—" In the commencement of their Raj in Garhwal, persons of rank and importance were either banished from the country or murdered, their villages burnt and thus the old families destroyed." As to their behaviour towards the subjects the same author states :— "their officers were severe, their manners as conquerors were rough, so that, at some distance from the seat of Government, insults and scenes of rapine were constantly acted. The soldiers married many women by force."

As to their administration of land revenue, we can not do any better than produce here Mr. Traill's account of it for the perusal of our readers.

"Owing to the lateness of the conquest of Garhwal

there was no attempt on the part of the Goorkhals to form a settlement there until 1811 (1219 Fasli or 1868 Sam). In that year a regular commission was sent from the Nepal Durbar consisting of Dasrath Khatri and Bahadur Bhandari for the purpose of forming the assessment of the land revenue, which with a few reservations in favour of individuals and temples was assigned in favour of troops, of whom three battalions were stationed in Garhwal. The assignment was by companies, of which there were five in each battalion, receiving each Rs. 8,672 G. R. per annum, and in addition the captain commanding received Rs. 5,005 a year, giving a total of Rs. 1,45,095 G. R., to be defrayed from the land-tax and cesses. The assessment of 1811, which continued to be the demand until the British conquest, amounted to Rs., 87,724, G.R. (= 65; 793 Fd.) whilst the actual receipts were for 1811 Rs. 71,819 G. R. for 1812 Rs. 57,735 G. R. and for 1813 Rs. 51,623 G.R. (= 38,718 Fd.) The high rate of this assessment entirely precluded, its realisation in full, and as the soldiery entirely relied upon it for their pay, no leniency was shown in its collection, and 'where default' occurred, the families of cultivators were seized and sold as slaves. Under such a system, cultivation rapidly decreased, and what were once flourishing villages relapsed into jungle and became the home of wild beasts. The assessment, however, was in general based on the actual capabilities of each village and for the earlier settlements under the British proved a valuable guide as to what the assets might be supposed to amount to in favourable years."

In addition to the land revenue mentioned above, 22,145 G. R. were annually raised from

various taxes. The principal items were Salami tax on Doms, looms, *bhent* on festivals, mines, mintage, Kanungo cess, customs and transit duties, taxes on catechu, *Cathbans*, and fines. "In Garhwal" says Mr. Traill, "where the Goorkha conquest had been more recent, the exactions were more heavy, the revenue imposed soon exceeded what the country could yield, the deficiency annually increasing from the attempt to enforce the full demand, so that, the condition of this district at the conquest by the British was much more deteriorated than that of Kumaun, and the progress of improvement much slower and more incomplete."

Offences of a petty nature such as cases of infringement of caste, assaults, fornication, adultery, and abuse were made subject to fines, and the cognizance of such offences, and the levy of fines were farmed out in separate divisions or districts to the highest bidder. Crimes of a serious nature including murder, theft to a large amount, killing of cows, etc., were reserved for the decision of the principal *Bharadars*\* present in the province. The nature of the punishments inflicted in such cases is not clearly laid down anywhere. However, we presume, it must have been severe, as traditions have shown that almost every Hindu Raja in India imposed heavy fines on offenders ; and if the individual was poor, and the offence was of treason, he was punished by death or mutilation. Thieves were killed or had one or both arms cut off. The Garhwal Rajas themselves were not an exception in imposing these punishments. The seizing of property without sufficient justification was not unknown in Garhwal. But even in cases of slight provocation during the Goorkha Raj,

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\* The great Council of State.

arms were pinioned or shackled to wooden blocks. Death was inflicted by the Rajas by hanging or beheading, whereas the Goorkhalis put their convicts to death with the most cruel tortures. There were severe forms of ordeal in common use in Garhwal from ancient times, such as red-hot iron carried in the hands for a certain distance, or the hands plunged in burning oil.

To sum up the Goorkhalis administration in Garhwal during their twelve years' reign,—we here quote a para. from Atkinson's Himalayan Dist. Gaz., volume III, page 253, which briefly recapitulates their short-lived rule thus:—"The Goorkhalis have ruled in Garhwal for nearly twelve years, previous to which a severe contest had been kept up, which drained the country of men and money. They appear, in their subsequent conduct to this unfortunate province, to have borne in mind the trouble it cost them to win it, and acted as if determined to revenge it. Its old families were destroyed; all those persons of rank and importance who were taken were murdered or banished; its villages burnt and desolated, and a great number of its inhabitants sold as slaves (two lakhs of Garhwalis, are said to have been sold as slaves). The remaining parts were oppressed by heavy taxes, and many voluntary banishments and emigrations took place to avoid a tyranny they could not withstand. Thus, throughout a great part of Garhwal, the traveller sees only the ruins of villages and the traces of former cultivation now abandoned. The inhabitants that remain are, in all probability, the lowest and most ignorant, and, it may fairly be presumed, have sunk lower in exertion and mind from the oppression they have groaned under."

Mr. Fraser writes that, "Garhwal for full twelve years suffered from the Goorkha animalism. The whole country under their harsh rule was in constant fear. As they were cruelly oppressed, their spirit of liberty was sorely broken, and desire for revenge was checked by the danger of avowing such sentiments. A deliverance from the state of misery they groaned under, was ardently, though hopelessly, wished for." And the subjects were to such an extent dread stricken that at a sight of a Goorkha official, they crept into their holes like mice. Such a picture as displayed above in a few words affords a just insight into the doings of the Goorkhas and the state of the country during their reign.

The story may pause here, for a short account of the ex-prince Sudarshan Shah, who, as we have previously stated, took refuge in the British province of Bareilly, and was leading his life in straitened circumstances, and was despairing of ever regaining his lost country. One day he offered to sell a part of his country to Captain Hyder Hearsay, provided he could regain it. Now here comes the idea of the British to conquer Garhwal for the Raja and themselves. On the one hand, Sudarshan Shah was expressing the desire of sharing Garhwal equally between himself and the British Government, if the latter could conquer the country for him. On the other hand, the Goorkhas had made incursions into the valley of the Ganges, which belonged to the English. When they were remonstrated with, they became more daring and defiant, and it was evident that nothing but war would persuade them to mend their ways. Therefore, in the year 1815 the province of Kumaun and Garhwal was invaded by Colonel Nicolls and the decisive battle was fought

at Sitoli near Almora, which ended in the cession of the whole of the Kumaun division to the British Government on the 25th April 1815 with a trivial loss in killed and wounded which amounted altogether to two hundred and eleven men.

It is remarkable that the anticipation of the ex-prince Sudarshan Shah of entering his lost dominion was fulfilled by the English. And Sudarshan Shah was reinstated as Raja over half of Garhwal in 1815, and the other half of the country came under the sway of the British rule on the date mentioned above. The Hon'ble Mr. E. Gardner became the first Commissioner for the affairs of the Kumaun division on the 3rd May 1815.

The Goorkha's full twelve year's sojourn in this country came to as abrupt an end as the commencement thereof. They left no monument in this land which may remind us of the rise and fall of their Raj, except the harshness, with which they handled the people of this country and of which the tradition is inherited by the Garhwalis up to the present day.

Before proceeding to describe the epoch of the present supreme rulers of this country, we shall conclude the record of the Rajas of State Garhwal, who succeeded after Raja Pradyuman Shah. Prince Sudarshan Shah after being reinstated by the British Government in the satrapy of western Garhwal, took up his residence at a small village called Tehri situated on the left bank of the Bhagirathi at an elevation of 2,278 feet above sea level. He built his residential palace on a flat piece of ground formed by a bend in the Bhilangana river just above its junction with the Bhagirathi. The aspect of the surrounding high hills is barren. It is a dry, hot place, and its climate resembles that of Srinager.

Raja Sudarshan Shah was a ruler of amiable disposition, so says the tradition. He soon re-established his power over his subjects. Since then four Rajas have ruled over the Garhwal State. The present Raja Narendra Shah is the fifth and is still a minor. The administration of the State is carried on by a Council of Regency presided over by an able, sympathetic and just civilian officer Mr. F. C. Chamier. The late Raja Sir Kriti Shah Bahadur, K. C. S. I., was a most enlightened, well educated and thoroughly up-to-date Prince. He completed the reforms inaugurated by his father Raja Pratap Shah and introduced some other essential reforms in his State. The chief of them formed the establishment of schools and the introduction of dispensaries and post offices at a few principal populous stations in the State. The State revenue underwent an appreciable increase during his reign. Two companies of well equipped Sappers and Miners were formed as his contribution to the Imperial Service Troops. Improvements in other directions also date from his reign. But the benevolent machinery set on foot by the late Raja Sir Kriti Shah Bahadur, is still far off from the easy grasp of the State peasantry who are, comparatively imperfect in some respects. Naturally they aspire for similar advantages as the people of the eastern hemisphere of Garhwal are enjoying. It is, therefore, essential for the present Raja to advance on and on, in the improvement of his subjects.

It will not be out of place here to mention the remarkable fact that the Kanak Pal dynasty has lasted unbroken for about 1300 years; and the average reigning period of each Raja of this long lived dynasty, (a complete list of which is appended) comes to about 21 years. Comparing it with the



Nanda, Prodytas, Saisunaga, Mauriya and Sunga dynasties we do not find this unparalleled continuity of dynasty in any of them. The good average length of each prince's reigning period can only be ascribed to their robust health due to the bracing climate of Himavanta.

None of the Rajas preceding Sir Kriti Shah, have left any glorious architecture and works of public interest in Garhwal, deserving to serve as a memento of their long lived Raj. Traditions, however, have it that every one of them was noted for mild rule, kindness to subjects, gentle behaviour and temperate living.

*Dynastical table of Raja Kanak Pal of Garhwal*

(BECKETT.)

| No. | Names.         | Year of Death<br>Sam. | No. | Names.          | Year of Death<br>Sam. |
|-----|----------------|-----------------------|-----|-----------------|-----------------------|
| 1   | Kanak Pal ...  | 756                   | 26  | Kamdeo Pal      | 1236                  |
| 2   | Syam Pal       | 782                   | 27  | Saiakhando      | 1254                  |
| 3   | Padu Pal       | 813                   | 28  | Lakhando        | 1277                  |
| 4   | A bigat Pal    | 838                   | 29  | Ananta Pal II.  | 1298                  |
| 5   | Sigal Pal      | 858                   | 30  | Purab Deo       | 1317                  |
| 6   | Ruttan Pal     | 907                   | 31  | Abhaya Deo      | 1324                  |
| 7   | Sali Pal       | 915                   | 32  | Jairam Deo      | 1347                  |
| 8   | Bidhi Pal      | 935                   | 33  | Asal Deo        | 1356                  |
| 9   | Madan Pal I.   | 952                   | 34  | Jagat Pal       | 1368                  |
| 10  | Bhagati Pal    | 977                   | 35  | Jit Pal         | 1387                  |
| 11  | Jai Chand Pal  | 1006                  | 36  | Ananda Pal II   | 1415                  |
| 12  | Prithi Pal     | 1030                  | 37  | Ajai Pal        | 1446                  |
| 13  | Madan Pal II.  | 1052                  | 38  | Kalyan Shah     | 1455                  |
| 14  | Agasti Pal     | 1072                  | 39  | Surder Pal      | 1470                  |
| 15  | Surti Pal      | 1094                  | 40  | Hansdeo Pal     | 1483                  |
| 16  | Jait Singh Pal | 1113                  | 41  | Bijai Pal       | 1491                  |
| 17  | Ananta Pal I.  | 1129                  | 42  | Sahaj Pal       | 1530                  |
| 18  | Ananda Pal I.  | 1141                  | 43  | Pallbladar Shah | 1555                  |
| 19  | Vibhog Pal     | 1159                  | 44  | Man Shah        | 1575                  |
| 20  | Subhajan Pal   | 1173                  | 45  | Syam Shah       | 1584                  |
| 21  | Vikarna Pal    | 1188                  | 46  | Mahipat Shah    | 1609                  |
| 22  | Vichitra Pal   | 1198                  | 48  | Prithi Shah     | 1671                  |
| 23  | Hansa Pal      | 1209                  | 48  | Maidni Shah     | 1717                  |
| 24  | Son Pal        | 1216                  |     |                 |                       |
| 25  | Kadil Pal      | 1221                  |     |                 |                       |

***Dynastical Table of Raja Kanak Pal of Garhwal.***  
**(BECKETT.)—Contd.**

| No. | Names.            | Year of Death<br>Sam. | No. | Names.                                  | Year of Death.<br>Sam. |
|-----|-------------------|-----------------------|-----|---|------------------------|
| 49  | Fateh Shah        | 1765                  | 56  | Bhawani<br>Shah                         |                        |
| 50  | Upendra<br>Shah   | 1766                  | 57  | Pratab Shah                             |                        |
| 51  | Pradipt Shah      | 1829                  | 58  | Sir Kirti<br>Shah                       |                        |
| 52  | Lalipat Shah      | 1837                  | 59  | Narendra<br>Shah, the pre-<br>sent Raja |                        |
| 53  | Jaikrit Shah      | 1843                  |     |   |                        |
| 54  | Pradyuman<br>Shah |                       |     |   |                        |
| 55  | Sudarsan<br>Shah  |                       |     |   |                        |

## PART III.

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### CHAPTER IX.

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#### *The Epoch of the British Reign.*

So far we have dealt with the Hindu, Greek, Saka, Mahomadan and Gurkha kings whose political influence extended more or less over this Himalayan tract. We now proceed to speak of a nation whose motto of *Rajdharm* differs in many ways from that of the nations referred to above. Security of life and property, mental, moral and physical progress of the subjects, have been their first and foremost aim. Their one ambition from the time they set foot in India, has been to bestow peace and liberty, and deal impartial justice to the people over whom they established their sovereignty. In fact these qualities and principles have been the corner stone upon which this colossal and brilliant empire has been built. We refer to no one else than the great British Nation. History bears testimony to the fact that since Asoka, the grandson of Chandra Gupta Maurya, who reigned in India twenty-two centuries ago, the Indians have never enjoyed such peace, security, liberty and progress of all sorts. Such is the nation to whose care the lot of the simple and extremely poor people of Garhwal was entrusted in October 1815.

Immediately after the annexation of Garhwal by the British, it was divided into two equal portions, Eastern and Western Garhwal. The former came under the direct control of the British Government, while the latter formed State Garhwal of which we have already spoken above.

The first person selected to rule over this country was W. G. Traill, Esq. (October 1815). Though his regime for some years was characterized by the exercise of plenary powers, yet he handled the rayats of the country with paternal love, a just hand, a wise policy, and a sympathetic heart. His connection with Garhwal lasted till 1835. The manner in which Mr. Traill treated the rayats, the manifold boons he got conferred upon them, the attempts he made towards improving the condition of the peasantry and the population of the country, can be judged from the feelings of admiration and respect with which his name is still remembered by the aged and educated community in Garhwal and Kumaun. He was succeeded by Mr. Batten, an officer of marked talent and ability. Mr. Batten gave laws and regulations to the people. Ever since then Garhwal has been under the care of a set of able and sympathetic officers.

What British rule has done for the people of this country may be best realized by comparing Garhwal under the Gurkhas as shown previously at some length, with Garhwal of the present day. When the English took it over from their predecessors, it was in a completely depopulated and impoverished state. The officers who had been entrusted with its administration during the first and second

decades of the English rule, deplored very much this paucity of population. But the eagerness with which the Government exerted itself to encourage immigration from distant localities and to improve the condition of the inhabitants and of their cultivation cannot be illustrated better than by reproducing here some of the paragraphs of the old Settlement Reports. In the 8th Settlement Report in 1841 Mr. Batten writes :—" In every *patti* there are one or two villages, thriving in character and with surplus members who are available to become *paikasht* cultivators of neighbouring estates. I have purposely in the wilder districts (Chandpur, Badhan, Choprakot, and Talla Salan for instance) left such villages lowly assessed, in order to increase their wealth, and render them reservoirs, whence its current can flow and fertilize the vicinity. Let the superfluous members of these communities be distinctly told that a good title will be given with the several patches of fine redeemable land in forest and that all fictitious claims to the monopoly of the waste have now been repudiated as an usurpation of Government rights, and as only tending to injure the country by increasing tigers and bears, and I am sure that the offers for new land will increase tenfold."

In 1861, Mr. Beckett writes :—" In fixing the *jama* he took into consideration all particulars affecting the present and future prosperity of every village. Where a hillside was steep, the terrace walls require extra labour, where the women were in excess of the men, where the men were generally old or the male population consisted

chiefly of boys ; where the land was too extensive for the village community to cultivate and its isolated position put it beyond the reach of non-resident cultivators ; where the vicinity of the jungle renders the crops liable to destruction by bears and deer and the cattle were likely to suffer from tigers ; these and other reasons induced him, in many instances, to assess land far below the average rate."

Similarly Sir Henry Ramsay, Col. Fisher, Messrs. Campbell, Pauw and other officers of the Crown, who were entrusted to rule over the Garhwalis, were one and all imbued deeply with such humane principles. The various Settlement Reports of Garhwal clearly show how closely they were themselves conversant with the actual condition of the people of this country.

By giving away unoccupied land in this way, the Government checked the excessive dispersion of the Garhwali population, and since barren land was to be had for the asking, numbers of homeless people sought protection and land in the district of Garhwal. Thus the *Sarkar* ameliorated the backward state of agriculture and the wretched condition of the peasantry.

Important reforms in the system of land tenure have been introduced by the British Government. In the by-gone time of the former Governments, the proprietary rights in land were vested in the Sovereign and were inalienable. The Sovereign always enjoyed an unrestricted power of alienation in land. Even at the present day, no private right

of transfer of land exists in the State of Garhwal, and sale of land in Tehri, even by a grantee, is regarded as an assumption of the royal prerogative and is punished accordingly. The cultivating community consisted simply of *Thátwáns* or grantees; *Kháikars* or under-proprietors, *Khurnis* or *Kainis* (the occupancy tenants) and the *Sirtans* or tenants-at-will.

“ The property in the soil is termed *thát* and grants in *thát* convey a freehold in the soil as well as the produce ” (Pauw). The *Thátwán* was but an agent of the Government for the collection of State revenue and several other dues. Property in the soil had generally been allowed to remain with the heirs of the grantee. And in the greater portion of the villages, the active proprietors kept the cultivation of the land in their own hands by entertaining labourers. In others the right to the property was vested in the descendants of some former grantee whilst the rights of occupancy and cultivation remained with the descendants of the original occupants who were in possession at the time of the grant. “ Where the land granted,” says Mr. Traill, “ was already held in property by others, those occupant proprietors, if they continued on the estate, sank into tenants of the new grantee, who, moreover, by the custom of the country, was permitted to take one-third of the estate or so into his own immediate cultivation. Of the remainder of the estate, the right of cultivation rested with the original occupants, who were now termed *Kháikars* or occupants in distinction from *Thátwán* or proprietor.” There was yet another class of tenants who were settled on the estate by the proprietors. By

virtue of paying a higher rent than any other kind of tenant a hereditary right of cultivation was allowed to this class, and as such this class of tenants came to be considered in the light of *Kháikars*. They were originally distinguished from the under-proprietary body (*Kháikars*) by the term of *Khurnis* or *Kainis*. In many villages the cultivation was carried on by tenants who had no acknowledged or prescriptive right of occupancy. These were the *Sirtans*. It was a system of land tenure which had been in vogue for centuries past, and was never disturbed by foreign conquest. Nor have the rights of the individuals ever been compromised by public sales of land. Proprietors and occupant tenants continued from father to son in the undisturbed use of their ploughs, as long as the quota of State or *jágirdári* and other dues were regularly paid."

In those days, arable land was plentiful and the labouring population could secure land for cultivation on most favourable terms. Therefore, the rent was not so heavy. However, the system was faulty for the following reasons:—(1) The rights of all classes of tenants were vague; (2) They were liable to be charged with high rent, and most of them were apt to be driven away by their superior tenant, if he was so inclined; (3) All the classes had to render manifold services to the State and to the proprietor of the land, and this was a restraint on the improvement and extension of cultivation; (4) And lastly it debarred the progress of society.

The British Government recognised all classes of land tenure mentioned above, but with



considerable modification in rights. The proprietary rights have been conferred in cultivated land upon landlords or village-owners. The *Thátwáns* and co-sharers are designated *hissedárs* who enjoy full right of transfer by sale or otherwise of the land they own. The old sub-proprietors or the occupancy tenants (*Khurnis* and *Kainis*) have been given a legal right and fixity of tenure with the title of *Kháikars*. The *Kháikar* pays a fixed rent for his holding between the Settlements. His *hissedár* has no right to eject him, unless he resigns his holding himself or dies issueless, when the land reverts to the *hissedár* or to the body of *Pakka Kháikars* as the case may be. The *Sirtán* remained as he was. The old superior proprietary *Thátwáns* have been recognised as *Thokdárs* who receive in cash usually 10 per cent. of the revenue of their *thokdari* villages, as *thokdári dastoer* (manorial dues). By the bestowal of the above-mentioned invaluable advantages upon the Garhwal peasantry, the agricultural industry has immensely improved as is visible by "sand turning into gold" and "desert into garden."

Turning to the assessment of the land revenue we find that in 1820 A.D., five years after the introduction of the British Raj, the net revenue from land amounted to Rs. 58,511, including Dehra Dun, whereas in 1896 A.D., excluding Dehra Dun, it was Rs. 1,65,727-8. per annum. The increase may suggest an increasing severity of taxation; but the facts do not bear out this interpretation. For the extension of cultivation was even more rapid than the enhancement of the land revenue. To explain

it clearly we may quote the census statistics for 1820 and 1901 A.D. A total of 1,25,000 for the population was roughly estimated by Mr. Traill by calculating 6·5 per house in 1820 ; while 4,29,900 souls have been reported in 1901 A.D. and 4,80,600 in 1911. Therefore we see that the increase in the land revenue has not been in proportion to the increase in the population. Explaining it in yet another way, we find that the average revenue rate on cultivation in 1840 was Rs. 1-2 per *bisi* or acre whereas in 1859 A.D. and for seventeen years after, the average rate fell to Re. 0-12-9 per *bisi*, although on the whole there was an increase in State revenue. It was due to more waste land having been brought under cultivation with but a small rate of revenue.

During the administrations of the former Governments, the actual revenue was paid in certain shares of gross produce, which was not exactly what is called a rack rent. But the poor peasant had to pay thirty-six other dues in addition to the land tax. Calculating them altogether, the land tax in comparison to that of the present day was very heavy and exorbitant. Moreover, the rent which the poor cultivators had to pay used to fluctuate annually. Even on comparing the assessment rate of Garhwal with that of the plains, it is found to be very low indeed. In the plains it roughly ranges from two to three rupees per acre ; while in Garhwal it is only a little above one rupee. Land in the plains is generally superior in productive power and easier to cultivate, though *taldón* and first class *upráon* land in Garhwal which is in no way inferior in fertility to the land in the plains

yet is lightly assessed. There has never been, so far as history and traditions reveal, a Government in Garhwal that has taken so small a share in the profit of the soil as that taken by the present rulers of Garhwal. It has always been the policy of the British Government to encourage the growth of private property in land, and to take for the State only a moderate share of the produce, but the former Governments hardly entertained this benign policy.

Famines have been frequent in this part of the country as in the rest of India in all ages and under every form of Government. But in old times little, if anything, was done to relieve the sufferings of the people. Now-a-days a famine attracts Government's prompt attention, and is bound to be met by all possible relief. In the event of scarcity, remedial measures are taken instantaneously by the Government. In many instances revenue is remitted; loans at a nominal rate of interest (Takavi) are granted to the needy zamindars to meet urgent emergencies, and food prices are reduced as much as possible. In addition, grain is imported from the plains, and distributed to the villages situated along the skirts of the Himalayas.

The next important point to be compared is the security of person and property which the present Government have guaranteed. Local history and tradition point out that from centuries past, the protective arrangements of the former Governments have been imperfect, as many chieftains who were masters of different parts of the country were in a state of internal turbulence. Their administration

of justice was imperfect. The persons and property of their subjects were to a certain degree insecure. The possessions of the weak were at the mercy of the strong. No one could keep to himself what he had produced unless he was capable of defending it. That was the reason why comparatively poor people voluntarily or under pressure used to become perpetual serfs to some strong man. History testifies that the officials of former Governments had more or less the characteristics of indolence and rudeness and were arbitrary in their exactions. Consequently agriculture was in a backward state and the rural population remained in a wretched condition. But under the British Raj the officials being highly educated and instinct with a sense of justice, and regard the subjects as children of the Sovereign. The administration is so perfect, that no one has the least fear of his person or property being insecure even for a moment. Everything one possesses is strongly felt to be his own and absolutely safe. The people have the assurance that they will enjoy the fruits of their own attainments. In fact the present Government, by following the highest ideals as laid down in *Mahabharata Sabha Parva*, Chapter 5, have set an example of what a highly benign Government should be.

A further comparison of the past Garhwal with the present one is necessary. Of the past we know nothing with certainty and can only get a glimpse here and there by the aid of faint rays of light afforded by the allusions and hints in traditions and histories. However, when we minutely scan the conditions of Garhwal from the period of the establishment of Raja Kanak Pal's rule in Chandpur, we

find Garhwal divided into about fifty-two *Thakurais*, all possessing small patches of territory distinguished by separate names, which were either derived from their caste affix or from the place they lived in. For instance, Aswal Sew, Patwal Sew, Kandar Sew, Rawat Sew, etc. The suffix "Sew" now corrupted into "Syun," being most probably one of the forms of the names of the lion, was used to express the might and achievements of the chiefs which they compared with those of a lion. They were at enmity with one another, and all of them were of predatory habits. The people were constantly harassed by their safety and privileges being encroached on. It can be presumed that many *garhs* (forts) on hills date from these chieftains' rule in Garhwal, and they might have served as signalling or watch posts. A debasing form of slavery was prevalent to a considerable extent during these chieftains' independence. This degrading practice appears to have been prevailing in Garhwal from very ancient times. There is a passage in *Vakbada Parva* of the Mahabharata in which it is mentioned that a Brahmana bewails of the fact that he has not sufficient money to buy a man to satisfy the monster. It clearly shows that even in the Epic age, slavery existed among Aryans and non-Aryans.

It cannot be said with certainty whether these Thakurais were attached to Raja Kanak Pal's Raj. Even if they were, they were not completely subdued. For history points out that this country was divided like Greece into many independent Rajput States until about 1400 A.D., when Raja Ajai Pal, a descendant of Kanak Pal, crushed these petty chieftains

independence, and organised the nucleus of a consolidated Raj in Garhwal, and softened the harshness of the Thakurai barbarism.

The condition of the peasantry and agriculture, however, had not been very prosperous. Mild predial servitude or serfdom, forced labour and official oppression continued during this period. In addition to these hardships, some of the cruel malpractices, e.g., sale of wives, children and widows, prevailed among the non-Aryans. People were corroded by endless superstitions connected with the worship of grotesque elements or inanimate objects of strange appearance.

Turning now to the dispensation of justice we see at a glance that the oriental system of Jurisprudence was crude, simple, rational and intelligible, and suited to the people. In those days the Raja was the sole authority in the country and hence the court was situated in his capital. The people being ignorant as learning grew dim and were afraid to face the Raja. Therefore, petty cases were hushed up by the village community. Trifling and mild disputes were also settled out of court by mutual consent of the parties or by the intervention of the *Panchait* (arbitration committee). The *Panchait* system in Garhwal had been very common and ancient, and it continued till some years after the introduction of the British rule. The parties not being satisfied with the decision of the *Panchait*, and if the dispute was dilatory, they then resorted to *Bunda* or ordeal called *nyaya*. The members of the *Panchait* used to be appointed by the parties to the suit.

There were different forms of ordeals in force in Garhwal, but the common form was that in which the plaintiff and defendant both would proceed to a selected deity and after worshipping it, one of the party who agreed upon to give up the cause of the dispute,

would with folded hands repeat the text thus:—O god, my opponent pledges himself to be right in this dispute, but the facts of it are known to *thee*, so that I give up my cause, with a view that *thou* would do me the justice, and thus the case would come to an end. This system had a very ancient origin. A decision of any dispute by ordeal was considered most binding, so much so, that a dispute settled in this manner was never complained of again. Only in cases of a serious nature in which reconciliation was impossible, the parties had to go together with their witnesses to the Raja's court, to his capital, and his award was final. The party which was proved to be false, had to pay a fine. It was another reason why few cases went to the court.

The nature of the punishment inflicted in those days was comparatively severe. In trivial cases brought before the subordinate officials, the offenders were generally pinioned or shackled to wooden blocks. In ordinary cases, such as infringement of caste, assault and fornication, the culprits were fined; the punishment of fine in the country was as efficacious as imprisonment, and the Raja himself allowed a fine to be paid in lieu of imprisonment. Cases of heinous offences\* were punished with death or mutilation. But such offences were very rare in those days. Even now there is a general absence of crime in these hills as compared with other districts. Serious crimes are scarcely perpetrated in Garhwal.

Now turning to the present political history of this country, our readers will be surprised to find what vast and important changes have been introduced within the short period of one century, which the former Governments could not effect during their many centuries' reign. Gross abuses characterized the local courts under the preceding Governments

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\* Destruction of human life, killing a cow, incest, robbery and burglary.

and the administration was an avowed item of public revenue and the office of a judge was often sold to the highest bidder. But now to meet the ends of justice and good Government, the country is divided into three Sub-divisions. Each has in its centre a Sub-divisional Court, in charge of a well trained and handsomely paid Magistrate under the supervision of an able and highly qualified judge, who is also the Deputy Commissioner of the district. All these officers tour about within their jurisdiction and dispense justice to the rayat impartially, thus affording the people free access and recourse to the law. Literate and ignorant, rich and poor, high and low, all are dealt with by the same rod. None has to fear anything in appearing before the law courts to lodge his complaints or file any suit or petition. In fact the courts in Garhwal are swamped by litigation. Parties are at liberty to entertain qualified pleaders to plead on their behalf. One who is not satisfied with the decision of the lower courts, can appeal to the higher courts of Deputy Commissioner, Commissioner, Board of Revenue or the High Court of Judicature as the case may be, till he obtains justice. There are fixed laws and regulations, and the courts and decisions are no more arbitrary.

Owing to the increase of wealth, population and enhanced value of landed property, litigation is on the increase. The old arbitrary Panchait and the system of ordeal which existed from a very remote period have altogether fallen out of use. In those days the central Government had very few departments, which were irregular in their working. Literate



and religious men were, therefore, selected for the meting out of justice to the injured. But the system was far from being satisfactory. Partiality and inability to find out real offenders were not uncommon. And this is why the Panchait and ordeal systems gradually gave way to a better form of administration. The people have now fully acknowledged the superiority of the law in force in the land, and have begun to appreciate the English system of tribunals. And as a matter of fact, it is admitted on all hands that the English judicial system of administration is unparalleled in the history of the world.

The material condition of the people has greatly improved. Those who were miserable, poor and had no property under the former Governments, have now awakened to a new life, since almost every Garhwali has the advantage of possessing more or less a permanent interest in land. Leaving aside all other advantages, the one of permanent possession of land on fixed terms has alone greatly ameliorated the material condition of the Garhwalis. Under British rule the people have been freed from the fetters with which feudal tyranny, ambitious Brahmanas and gross superstitions held them bound. The wisdom that had illumined the country in ancient times, but was hidden, like buried treasure in a ruined castle, from the ignorant and oppressed peasantry has now been laid open to them. The gate of commerce—the unfailing source of wealth and prosperity to the people, was completely blocked to the Garhwalis by natural barriers and other impediments. The

present Government has widely opened it, and the country has been making steady progress in this line commensurate with the corresponding increase in the wealth and development in industry of the district. The people of Garhwal have many sources of income now and the signs of the country's betterment in every branch of the public income are visible.

The writer has observed that the water utensils used by the peasantry fifty years ago were almost wholly earthen (*chattis*) or wooden (*parotha* or *theky*), but that now they are of brass and copper. The females wore pewter and brass bangles or churis made of clay or lac, but now they have altogether been replaced by silver. The dress of the people has become expensive, for many of them now attire themselves in coats and pants.

The sale of children, slavery, and stoning to death of an adulterer and other cruel customs have been repudiated and made penal.

In other directions too the beneficial effects of progress and enlightenment are felt. When Garhwal was the country of the Panchalas, it was at the zenith of its prosperity and grandeur. It was the spring head of Indian culture, civilisation and spirituality. It has been the cradle of the Seers of the Vedas and highly cultured Rishis, who fostered Vedic, philosophic and scientific learning in Garhwal. There were hermitages, monasteries and colleges with a huge number of disciples reading in them. There was a Parishad (University) of high repute in which brilliant pupils from far off lands were sent

to enrich their learning. We know from *Bṛihadāranyaka Upanishad* VI. 2. that Saveta Ketu, a highly intelligent pupil, was sent out to this university to prosecute higher Sanskrit learning. History points out that even to the eighth or ninth century A.D., there have been highly intellectual men in Garhwal. Learned Pandits used to come here from great distances to interchange ideas with them. But from this period onward the decline of high learning in Garhwal set in. Only some religious learning remained, but it was confined to the Brahmanas ; while a knowledge of reading, writing and household accounts was possessed by a few Rajputs. Though there had been private institutions in many Brahmanic and respectable Rajput villages, yet the masses remained completely ignorant educationally.

The present Government considered it to be one of the duties of the State to impart education to the people of India. In 1835, Lord William Bentinck, the then Governor-General of India, appointed a committee presided over by Lord Macaulay, and passed the famous resolution of March 7, 1835, by which the English language was established as the medium of superior education in India, and in the main the principles of the higher education in India have ever since been adhered to. In Garhwal, however, nothing was done until 1840, when the foundation of public instruction in Garhwal was laid by establishing only an elementary vernacular school at Srinagar.

The village schools were established in the North-Western Provinces by the wise and enlightened Lieutenant-Governor Sir James Thomson. So it

was sometime after 1854, that village schools were for the first time founded in this district; as in 1860, "Mr. Beckett wrote that schools in the interior were unknown and a 3 per cent. *cess* was established for the purpose and gave 58 schools to the district."

In 1854 a separate department of public instruction was constituted, and the Kumaun Circle, comprising Garhwal, was brought into existence in 1857. Since then the efforts of the department have been chiefly directed to the development of elementary education with the object of conveying to the masses, who were utterly incapable of obtaining any education worthy of the name by their own unaided efforts, useful and practical knowledge, suited to every station in life. Schools were planted all over the district in the well populated localities in each *patti* or *pargana* and no fee was imposed upon the pupils.

Regarding the establishment of high schools for imparting English education, the local representatives of the Government were for some time very conservative in this direction; most probably because they were waiting to see the attitude of the Garhwalis themselves. Only in recognition of the necessity of imparting English education, the Episcopal Methodist American Mission, who were the pioneers in the spread of English education, in this country, were allowed to establish in 1865, one high school at Chopera near Pauri. In reality for a full decade English education made little impression on the ignorant masses. Boys of Garhwali high families only sought education in English. When, however, the earliest successful products of this school were provided with good

public employments and some of them were dazzled by the bright worldly prospects opened up before them, the people at large got an impetus to learning. They recently expressed their ardent desire for having a Government High School, which has since been established at Srinagar.

Many boys now receive vernacular education in village schools as a preliminary step to secondary education in English and are turned out as matriculates within a short period of five years and are thus saved a good deal of expense.

All sorts of public institutions are now cropping up all over the district. The chief of them are two English high schools, six vernacular middle, four teachers training, and about one hundred and fifty village primary schools, supervised by a competent staff. Great intellectual activity is now to be seen among thousands of Garhwali youngsters.

The present mode of education differs much from the old Hindu system in many ways. The main object of the Oriental system of learning was the moral and spiritual culture of the soul, the realisation of God's consciousness and the knowledge of various sacrifices. The last was of little material value to the people except the Brahmanas, as the other classes were forbidden by them to the fruits of the tree of knowledge. Only the Brahmanas were able to read and write and they monopolised all the offices in the State. The ambition of the priestcraft held even the ruling chiefs and officials bound down by their narrow-minded behests.

The education given us by the present Government is of a secular kind, neutral in religion. It has revealed to us a vast treasure of knowledge. Western science has unveiled many a mystery of Nature. Many of our absurd superstitions have been exploded. The people have begun to take under its influence more care for the needs of the body. They have begun to understand the meaning of the interdependence of class upon class, caste upon caste, and even of a nation upon a nation. In fact, the people have been dazzled by the glamour of Western civilisation.

*“ And East and West, without a breath  
Mixt their dim lights, like life and death,  
To broaden into boundless day.”*

—(Tennyson)

The British Government have opened to the people careers in the public service without any distinction of race or creed. The influence of English education has been felt by a large circle of the population, as can be judged from the large number of yearly admissions to the High Schools. In the sphere of higher education, in spite of all the facilities afforded by the present rulers, Garhwal, as compared with its sister districts cannot boast of an humble niche even to the Brahmanas. It is only an insignificant number of pupils who care to go beyond the rudimentary course of instruction. Most of the boys leave study after they pass the Upper Primary test, some only reading up to the Vernacular Middle. The general belief is that pecuniary means do not allow them to continue study. Admitting that it is so, says Mr.

O. S. Marsden "that very poverty has been the priceless spur that has goaded man up to his own loaf." Garhwal on the other hand, is a land of opportunities, an education itself. Its climate is a tonic and is stimulating to work. That it had once been a renowned seat of learning of the highest order, ought to be a beacon light to its people to move onward. The country is full of resources throughout in its land which should invite the people to display their energy in the direction of acquiring higher education which the benevolent Government afford facilities to spread.

Plague (*golia rog*), enteric fever (*mahamari*),  
**Sanitation and Public Health.** cholera (*haiza*) and small pox (*sitla*) were the constant endemic diseases from the visitation of which the poorer classes of Garhwal frequently suffered. Plague used to break out in certain *parganas*, and hundreds of men fell victims to this dire disease. In fact, the plague was a disease peculiar to Garhwal long before it was known in any other part of India. Medical enquiries carried out in 1885 by Doctors Francis and Pearson proved that the disease had its origin in causes some of which are enumerated here. Filthy habits of the people who kept cattle, fowls, goats, and other animals in their dwelling houses, and threw all refuse and litter just outside the doors mainly accounted for its attack. It might have also been due to the use of old and bad grain, growing of cucurbitaceous plants near their houses, planting of hemp immediately in front of and around their dwellings, thus obstructing the circulation of

and rendering the air distinctly miasmatic. This disregard of cleanliness was one of the chief causes of the other diseases as well, which were prevalent in Garhwal during the hot months and after the rains. In lower Garhwal the cattle are still stalled or housed in the lower stories of the dwelling houses, while cowdung is accumulated in front of them. The habitations are ill suited for health or convenience—the apartments being very low, dark and small. In many cases no provision is made for ventilation, and the surroundings are polluted with dung.

The people of Garhwal being of a religious bent of mind, ought not to have been wanting in the observance of laws of sanitation and health as all the Hindu rituals and modes of worship were strictly framed on sanitary principles. But the people as stated before sank low in point of energy and spirit on account of the oppression which they groaned under the former rulers. Where such had been the case, it cannot be doubted, but that, there must have prevailed ignorance causing extinction of feelings in regard to the improvement of physical and moral conditions of a people. However, under the present benign Government they evince amiable qualities in every respect and now they are more sensible in regard to the observance of the sanitary laws.

Before and some years after the advent of the British rule, the people were beset with glaring sanitary evils both in home and in their surroundings—evils which tended to cut short the thread of life and kept them more or less constantly ailing from preventable and curable diseases interfering with the proper growth and maturation of their children and infants. The Garhwalis had degenerated in



respect of their ancestral virtues, on account of the frequent terror and mental anxieties caused by these diseases.

Small-pox, Cholera, and Plague themselves are stated to have spread far and wide in Garhwal and snatched away hundreds of lives annually. The present supreme Government from the time of its assuming the control of this country began to find out the particular cause or source of each malady and to remove or abate its origin. The spread of small-pox was checked by the introduction of vaccination, although inoculation was practised, side by side with vaccination, by those with whom the latter found disfavour. Inoculation in any form was, however, prohibited by making it penal, in terms of the provisions of Act XXIV of 1868.

To introduce sanitary measures Dr. Pearson, the Superintendent of Vaccination drew up some rules, and circulated them in almost every village in Garhwal, the main purport of which was that the closed and low dwelling houses should be provided with windows, and that they should be white-washed. To keep the surroundings of a village in good sanitary state, *paswans* were appointed, and cattle-sheds were removed to a distance from the houses. Many other sanitary measures were introduced in the country during his tenure of office. By the indefatigable exertions of Dr. Pearson the spread of many epidemics and other diseases were to a large extent checked and abated. Since then increasing attention on the part of Government has steadily been bestowed on the sanitary improvements and the general amelioration of the conditions of the public and especially on the pilgrim route, the good results of which are already visible. Thus the

life of the Garhwalis has been safeguarded and preserved from the attack of many a dreaded disease. The standard of their physical fitness and efficiency combined with comfort, freedom from anxiety, and other means of attaining a higher physical energy, has been much improved.

In 1851, dispensaries on the pilgrim road were opened, the largest of them being at Srinager. Several others have since then been added, numbering altogether 9 on the pilgrim route and four elsewhere. These are kept under the charge of a trained and efficient staff consisting of a Civil Surgeon, three Assistant and a number of Sub-Assistant Surgeons and Compounders. Thousands of poor patients are yearly healed and cured, whilst thousands of others have their distress mitigated. A travelling dispensary has recently been established in the district which was particularly adapted to the needs of the people, and has been doing considerable good to them. Cattle diseases have also been endemic in Garhwal causing great loss, but now the Government has taken preventive measures by establishing travelling Veterinary Hospitals and thus saves yearly thousands of dumb animals from death.

The introduction of Female Hospitals in India, by the then *Vicerine* Lady Dufferin has been of immense value to the fair sex. Were this display of philanthropy however manifest in Garhwal, it would not only bring about an amount of relief to the female population of Garhwal but would command the highest appreciation of all.

In the year 1914 the Government deputed Mr. G. F. Adams, I. C. S., to enquire into the possibility

of further improving the sanitary arrangements on the pilgrim route. Thanks to the painstaking zeal and exertion with which he discharged his special duties, he made many important suggestions to the Government for the amelioration of the sanitation of the pilgrim route. Sweepers have been provided from Hardwar to Badrinath, and works for safeguarding the water supply from contamination have been taken up and are in rapid progress. Much has been done but more remains yet to be done. The mortality from malarious fevers and cholera is still large. The one cardinal requirement of the district is improvement in village sanitation which still leaves much to be desired. However, we can say that there is no one in Garhwal who is not grateful to the British Government for evincing so much interest and doing all that lies in their power to ameliorate the general health and the needs and aspirations of the people.

It has already been stated that Nature has considerably differentiated this country in its features and formation from the other adjoining hills, and placed many an obstacle in its way to carry on trade and commerce. Before Garhwal came under the Crown the means of communication from one place to another were wretched thready pathways constructed along steep hills and through gorges, thick jungles, and hollows. A traveller could hardly cover a few miles in a day and that even not unattended with the risk of his life. Many rivers of voluminous size were unbridged. Rivulets and streams which swell in the rains, compelled a traveller to wait till their subsidence. The principal rivers were, however, bridged with jhulas or rope bridges

with bamboos for a foothold stretched from bank to bank,—a dangerous and precarious means of transit. These *jhulas* seem to have originated with the ancient people inhabiting the skirts of the Himalayas. In out of the way places rope bridges are still in existence, but at all events they are fraught with considerable danger and in many instances accidents have happened. The country has fully been a century under the British Raj but these primitive ways of fording streams have not yet altogether disappeared. Former rulers of Garhwal had never devoted their attention or money in the removal of those hardships or in the improvement of the conditions of their subjects. The change in this direction too is typical, of the many and great improvements made by the British Government.

Now many of the villages have been linked together by broad pathways, and *parganas* by good roads. In fact the whole district is interwoven with a network of good broad roads which are almost everywhere well graded. A large number of rivers have strong splendid iron suspension bridges over them, while a good many *nallas* have been bridged over with strong masonry arches. At short distances on the main roads small *chattis* or marts have grown up where the weary travellers may find provision and rest. A wonderful change is visible all over the country. Trade has stretched its wings widely. Thus Garhwal has obtained means which may awaken its inhabitants into new activity.

The great pilgrim road from Haridwar to Kedar-nath and Badrinath and thence to Rāmnagar in Kumaun was first inaugurated by Mr. Traill in 182728

and the work was completed in about seven years, and has since reached such a state of perfection that hundreds of blind (Surdas) and maimed persons annually find little difficulty in visiting the most sacred northern shrines. Had it not been for the generous attention of the British Government to construct the roads in this country, access to the northern *tirthas* would have been painfully toilsome to the rich while practically impossible for the bulk of the pilgrims. In fact the British Government are thus instrumental in saving annually the lives of thousands.

Though the Railway system has only been extended up to the southern extremity of Garhwal, nevertheless it can be expected that at no distant future there will be a railway communication between Dehra Dun and Srinagar, thus paving the way for the development of the industries and external trades of the country. Though this improvement will necessitate a large expenditure on the part of Government, yet it will be gradually repaid by a large pilgrim traffic and the export of a variety of valuable timber and slabs which Garhwal abounds in. The extension of the Railway to the district will cause its dealing with the Forest Department and create a labour market and opening for the educated youths.

In the year 1862, Government levied a *cess* called *Dāk cess*, and introduced a postal service which has now extended to each *patti* and well populated localities. Runners carry the *Dak* rapidly. The communication fee is so small that a post card worth

only a pice can be sent from Badrinath to any part of India and Burma, letters, parcels and value-payable articles are carried to the extreme end of Garhwal on a nominal commission fee. The safe delivery of each article is practically guaranteed. The department makes and realises money payments, and includes the banking of the poor men's savings, as well as the distribution of emergency medicines to the peasantry and pensions to the retired Government servants. There is no country in the world where the rates of the postage are so low or where the postal service is better managed than in India. Through the instrumentality of the postal system the people of the country are making a good deal of progress.

There is another institution intimately connected with this service, *viz* :—the Telegraph Department—although only a few stations on the main road from Hardwar to Badrinath and Kedarnath are at present linked by the telegraph system. The majority of the people, however, do not know that a message can be flashed from the skirts of the Himalayas or Badrinath to Cape Comorin, a distance of about 1,600 miles in a few hours at a fee of six annas only, or that they can get telegraphic money orders immediately when they need money, at whatsoever a distance they may happen to be.

It is a wonderful discovery. Ancient India never witnessed such an easy and economic way of communicating messages to a distance. In by-gone times, it is said, that the Rishis by the power of Yoga acquired occult power to know what was going on in the world, and to produce at will things of enjoyment.

which were available in far off cities. Even if it was so, these advantages were not available to all.

Before finishing this chapter, we deem it proper to recapitulate briefly what the British Raj has done for Garhwal.

1. It is almost impossible to conceive the progress which Garhwal has made within the space of a hundred years. Garhwal held an insignificant position among its sister districts of the United Provinces. She has now been recognised as a land of warlike races. Two regiments composed purely of the Rajputs, were raised some years ago, and stationed at Lansdowne in Garhwal. In the present European War they have proved to be hardy and remarkable for their fighting efficiency. This honour alone is of inestimable value to the country.

2. Horrible and cruel practices such as the burning of the widows, sale of children and debasing slavery, which had been coming down from remote antiquity, and were sanctioned by social and religious usages came to an end under the auspices of the enlightened British Raj.

3. Garhwali Rayats from centuries past, never enjoyed what one with modern ideas could call security. Person and property were both exposed to dangers. Now-a-days the rights of personal safety, liberty and rights to private property are secure to a high degree. No man is any longer by reason of his wealth or rank, so high as to be above the reach of the law, and none on the other hand is so poor or insignificant as to be beyond its protection.

4. During the present rule the population has increased fivefold and continues to increase rapidly.

The checks on the growth of population which formerly existed have either almost ceased or been retarded to a degree, by the indefatigable efforts of our benign Government.

5. The country's agricultural resources are flourishing considerably, and people have opened their eyes towards Commerce and Industry. By the removal of vexatious restrictions and by the introduction of means of transit and communications, they have been encouraged to swim prosperously with the stream of human progress.

6. The English Government have bestowed much attention and energy on the spreading of Western education among the people of this country. Elementary education is now available at their own doors, secondary education in their close neighbourhood and higher education at a reasonable distance. But in spite of all these facilities, the people are still far behind those of the other districts situated in close proximity to Garhwal. In India people have enriched themselves vastly as a result of Western education. The Punjab, for instance, which has only been about 65 years under British rule, has produced during this short period thousands of highly cultured and educated young graduates who are helping the Government in the higher Departments, or exhibiting their activities in many other useful lines, specially in the introduction of industries which have improved the material condition of their country. It is, therefore, a matter of regret that after being under the protection of the most civilised and enlightened Government for a full century, the country could produce only a dozen graduates, an insignificant number in a population



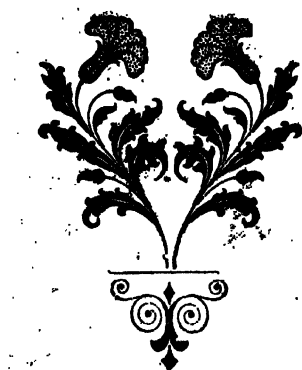
of about five lakhs. The blessings of Western education conferred upon India by the present Government are the greatest of all boons and of inestimable value and the whole of India owes a good deal of gratitude to the British Raj. It is owing to the feeble aptitude and to a certain extent the impoverished condition of the Garhwalis that there has been up to the present no remarkable progress in education and, therefore, her claims to secure a share of employment in the higher posts of the State cannot be regarded as sufficiently strong. However, the present generation is showing hopeful signs of energy and activity in grasping the fruits of the tree of education which has been planted all over India by our benign Government.

7. Formerly there was a common saying in this country that they were living in the land of darkness. Indeed it was so. Garhwal is closed in a sort of natural fort. Many impregnable barriers existed. Its jungles were infested with thieves, robbers and furious wild beasts. The Garhwali could never think of making a pilgrimage to the Eastern, Southern and Western *Tirthas* in India. Orthodox Garhwalis in very rare instances used to go as far as Gaya which meant a journey of six months and uncertain return. Since the removal of obstructions and the opening of easy communications the country has stepped into the wider arena of the world. Thousands of her sons are now serving in far off countries, even across the seas.

8. The British rule by patient and intelligent efforts has induced the people of Garhwal and Kumaun to rehabilitate their national life from

the utmost apathy and ignorance in which it was sunk by the misrule and oppression of former Governments. In fact, the present rulers have blown upon these hills the breath of new thoughts and ideals and have brought another spring-time, as it were, engendering the sap of a fuller and more generous life in the withered trunk and branches.

9. Great and marvellous are the changes that have been wrought over the face of Garhwal within the brief span of a century. But though the period is short, yet it stands out as a shining land-mark in the history of Garhwal. The country is grateful to the British Government for the manifold boons conferred upon her. The late sister Niveditta, a worthy English lady, has in her estimation of the religion of Garhwalis, observed them to be "true Hindus" and hence we must not forget our religious duty towards our King. For is he not born with the spirit of Vishnu according to Hindu Scriptures? Loyalty to the King-Emperor in whose peaceful reign the people are once again enjoying the "Ram Raj" of venerable antiquity is the characteristic which every true Garhwali should be imbued with. Our Garhwali readers will, we hope, ponder over the lessons of history, the progress that their ancestors made in science, art and religion, and do all that lies in their power to further the peace, prosperity and honour of this celestial land. Divine protection and favour widen the wisdom and strengthen the mutual good-will between the officers of the Crown and the Garhwalis, for these are the paramount factors in the achievement of a glory as a relief which the dark ages of the past only serve.



















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